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ABSTRACT

Prepared under provisions of a federal grant for preparing teachers of handicapped students in both regular and special education classrooms, the inservice project described in this report was intended to retrain both regular classroom and special education teachers in a Texas school district in the research-based strategies of spelling instruction. The six chapters of the report contain the following: (1) a description of the grant and its rationale; (2) a review of research supporting the need for teacher retraining, on both a national and a state level; (3) descriptions of two studies conducted in the school district to compare teachers' personal beliefs about spelling and their actual teaching practices and their beliefs about spelling and their personal spelling habits; (4) a description of the phase one training model, which involved a central office administrators' awareness session, a building-level administrators' planning session, training of experimental group teachers, training of the control teachers, and selection of experimental and control classes; (5) the results of a study that investigated the effectiveness of the training program; and (6) a description of the second phase training model, used with volunteer teachers throughout the school district. Extensive appendixes contain copies of test instruments used in the study, tables of data, and materials used in the training program. (FL)

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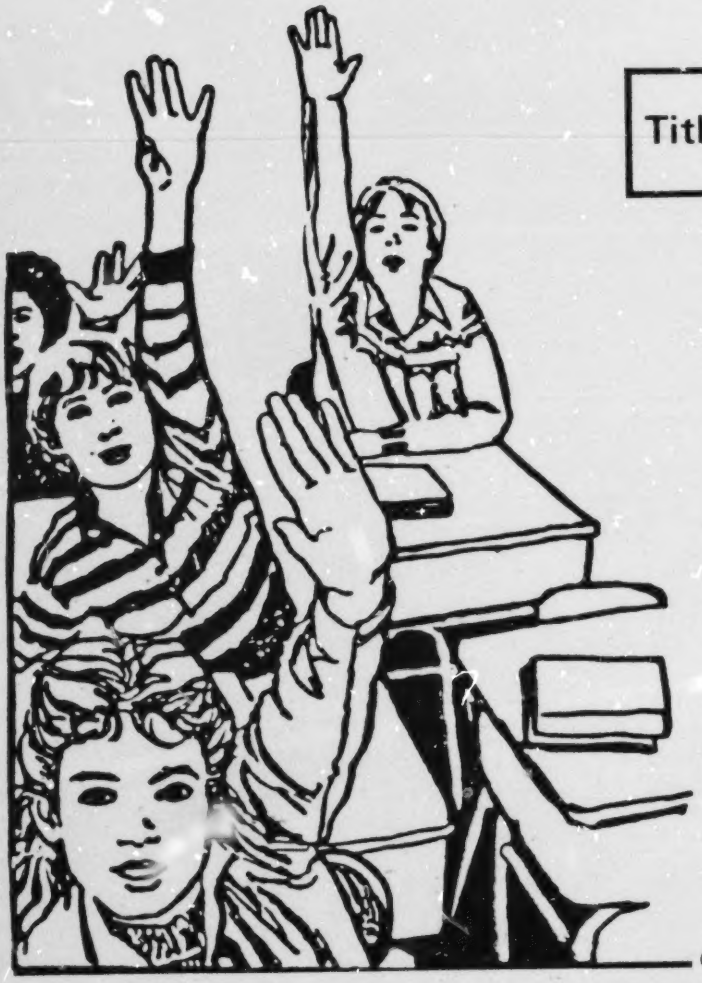
TRAINING TEACHERS TO USE RESEARCH-BASED STRATEGIES IMPROVES STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT IN SPELLING

Edited by

Cheryl L. Laurent and Elton G. Stetson



Title VI-D Personnel Preparation

Region V
Education
Service Center

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Dr. Fred J. Waddell
Executive Director

May 1984

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1 Inservice Training: Does It Really Make A Difference

1 Inservice Training: Does It Really Make A Difference In Student Achievement?

PURPOSE OF THE GRANT

It is the purpose of Title VI-D Preparation for Handicapped Personnel to develop and disseminate teacher training programs which up-grade the quality of instructional services to handicapped children in both regular education and special education programs. The Region V Education Service Center selected as its proposed project the retraining of regular and special education teachers in the researched-based teaching strategies of spelling instruction.

It was our purpose to:

- disseminate current research-based instructional spelling strategies to regular and special education teachers;
- instruct the teachers in the use of a proven effective instructional strategy (Stetson Reading/Spelling Vocabulary Program);
- implement a 12 week instructional spelling program during the spring of 1984 involving the research supported strategy (Experimental Group) and the traditional basal spelling approach (Control Group);
- design a research study to determine if teacher training, using proven research supported instructional strategies, affects gains in student achievement.

RATIONALE FOR THE GRANT

Based on a survey of elementary and secondary teachers conducted by Region V Education Service Center it was evident that teachers were not aware of the most current research supported instructional spelling strategies. Teachers believe what they teach and they teach what the textbook publishers present. This is true of most teachers in all areas of the United States and is not a problem common only to the Region V area.

After 80 years of research into the effectiveness of instructional strategies of spelling, little has filtered to the classroom. Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1978) developed a comprehensive analysis of the literature and determined which teaching strategies were research supported and which were not (Appendix 1). Stetson and Lyman (1981) then compared the research supported activities with the textbooks adopted for use in the classrooms of the United States (Appendix 5). Their findings indicated that as many as 90% of the textbooks incorporated teaching strategies in their programs which were not research based.

In reviewing the course requirements for teacher certification it appears that most training institutions only provide three hours of classroom instruction for prospective teachers in the area of teaching spelling. Professors indicate that their programs usually involve a review of the teachers manuals of the state adopted spelling textbooks. Because publishers have not presented research based strategies in their textbooks and because teachers are not traditionally trained as to the effective spelling methods as reported in the literature, little has changed in spelling instruction across the nation.

Fitzgerald, (1951) summarized the research to identify the most effective method for teaching spelling. His findings continue to be supported in the 1980's.

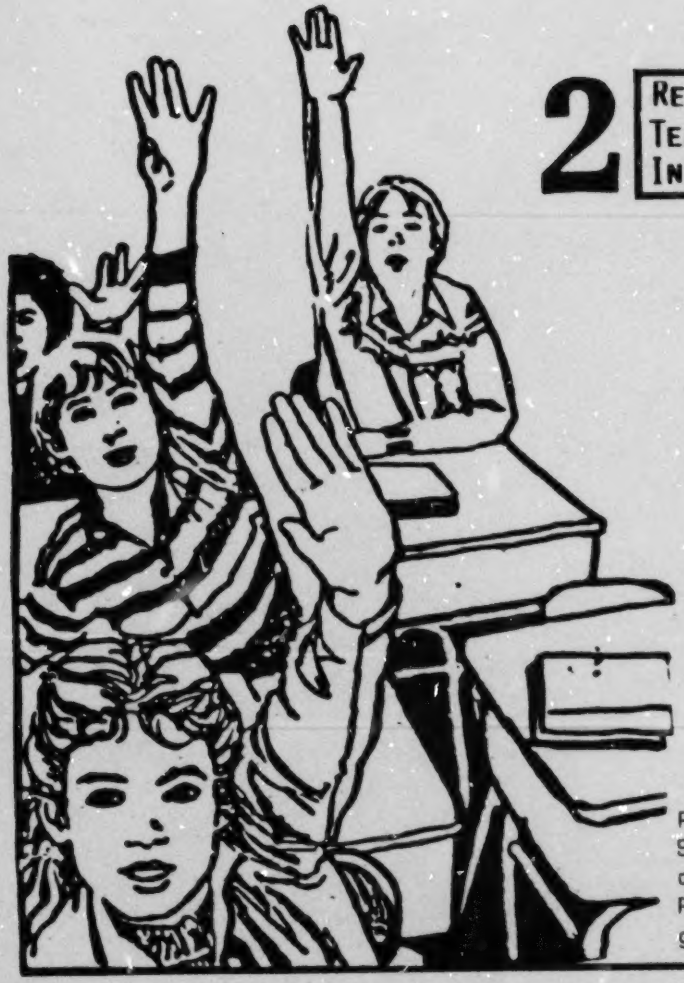
The method is simple: 1) look at the whole word; 2) say the word; 3) say the word parts; 4) cover the word and visualize the word; 5) write the word; 6) check the word immediately; 7) correct the word, if misspelled; 8) repeat.

If this strategy improves spelling, then it follows that increasing student achievement is simple. All that is needed is a list of words and teacher training so that the teacher can translate the strategies supported in the literature into daily classroom instruction.

The Stetson Reading/Spelling Vocabulary Program was chosen as the focus of teacher training because:

- Dr. Elton Stetson of the University of Houston has spent the last 5 years researching the various spelling strategies and his is the most current information available.
- He has developed a teaching process that is adaptable to any list of words and incorporates research based strategies in the instructional program.
- His program has been proved effective with 4,000 students (most from the East Texas area) especially for those students who were significantly below their age/grade placement level in Spelling.
- The instructional program involved minimal teacher training and it was a program that could be implemented at a minimal cost to the district.
- It was felt that the program would be accessable to special education students in the mainstram program especially as teachers gained the skill of individualizing spelling instruction for groups of students.

2 Research Supporting The Need For Teacher Retraining In Spelling Instruction



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2 Research Supporting The Need For Teacher Retraining In Spelling Instruction

Introduction

There is ample evidence collected at the national, state and local level of education justifying the need for retraining teachers in effective spelling instruction. Generally, teachers tend to form their philosophies of spelling based on the commercial materials in use at the time. Whether the program is supported by research or is in conflict with research makes little difference. The literature reveals that teachers: (1) are manipulated by the materials available: (2) define their theories by describing the program they use: (3) spend the majority of their instructional time managing the basal program: and (4) make instructional decisions based on what comes next in the basal (Phelps-Terasaki, Phelps-Gunn, and Stetson, 1983: Duffy, 1982: Shannon, 1981: Durkin, 1982).

The intent here is to justify the need for a grant to train teachers in research-supported spelling instruction by providing theoretical and empirical research findings to support the need. Consider the following statements as evidence for the need for teacher retraining or in most cases initial training:

- Research at the national level demonstrates clearly that the majority of published materials in spelling are built on strategies that have little or no support in the literature.

- Extensive research with the five currently adopted spelling programs in the State of Texas shows that all five programs follow a similar philosophy of instruction, subskill spelling, which finds little or no research to support its effectiveness.

- Recent research conducted among hundreds of teachers served by the Region V Education Service Center (East Texas) shows that 85 to 90 percent of the teachers polled use Texas adopted materials, believe in the strategies presented in their textbooks, possess philosophies compatible with those of their programs, believe their program is adequate and, therefore, support instructional strategies that are highly suspected.

- Teachers believe in their materials whether research supported or not because (a) their teacher preparation programs failed to include adequate training in the teaching of spelling, (b) publishers of spelling programs failed to make known the research on effective spelling instruction and, therefore, (c) teachers have no basis upon which to judge a program as effective or ineffective.

- In spite of the fact that teachers teach spelling on the subskill philosophy (mastery of rules) and personally believe in subskill spelling, research on the methods used by these same teachers when they spell, shows clearly that they do not use subskill spelling in any way. Rather, they use holistic approaches which are diametrically opposite from what they teach or believe.

The detailed review of the literature which follows is an elaboration of the five points summarized above.

RESEARCH ON SPELLING EFFECTIVENESS AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The most comprehensive reviews of the literature on spelling instruction during the past 10 years have been those reported by Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1978), Boutin (1980), Taylor (1981), and Stetson and Taylor (1983). Based on these reviews there are clearly identifiable strategies in spelling that are either clearly supported or lack support. Listed below are a number of strategies that are commonly found in most spelling programs used nationally that have little or no support in the literature followed by a second list of strategies that have received substantial support but rarely found in current spelling textbooks.

STRATEGIES LACKING RESEARCH SUPPORT

While any spelling strategy or approach that has been researched will be supported by some studies and rejected by others, there are some strategies used for years and years by the majority of publishers that receive little or no empirical support, regardless of the amount of research when the research was conducted. The strategies listed below are among those that are highly suspected because the evidence collected has either rejected their effectiveness as a spelling strategy or raised serious doubts as to their effectiveness.

- Grouping words in lessons because all the words have common sounds spelled in different ways (e.g., say, eight, prey, vein, break, aid, guage, etc.) focuses on the spelling of sound rather than on the spelling of words.

- Grouping words in lessons because all the words have common letter patterns (e.g., sat, mat, rat, etc.) produces better test scores for short-term memory, significant losses on a test of long-term memory and encourages students to spell unknown words by remembering a rhyme word which may not be spelled the same way.

- Learning the rules of spelling, the science of knowing the 203 or more rules governing the writing of our 44 speech sounds 500 different ways using only 26 letters, is an approach supported by most programs and teachers but, in actuality, not utilized even by those who believe and teach such strategies.

- Practice using words in context utilizing activities such as sentence completion, context clues, and fill in the blanks is a comprehension activity that has little to do with spelling.

- Exercises in word meanings using vocabulary that has long been known by the student in his/her speaking and listening language is considered to be a waste of time.

- Studying hard spots in words or focusing attention on a particular part of the word that, in someone's opinion, is more difficult when, in fact, many words that are difficult for some are not for others. A hard spot in a word is unique to each speller and studying the whole word in its gestalt is far more beneficial and less time consuming.

. Having separate lists of words that are difficult such as "demon words" and separating them from easier words is highly questionable since words that are difficult for some are easy for others and estabalishing separate lists ignores the individual differences of the students.

. Introducing words and providing instruction without the benefit of pretesting such that all students study all words whether known or not is one of the most flagrant violations of ethical educational practices in instruction and ignores the possibility that instruction may not be necessary for all students.

. Writing words several times without the benefit of immediate feedback and self-correction after each writing of the word often encourages incorrect spelling.

. Sound-spelling instruction in which students are presented the phonetic or dictionary spelling of words that are to be rewritten in the regular orthography or acceptable spelling provides the speller with the alternative spellings of every word which, under fire of writing, increases the opportunity to spell incorrectly.

STRATEGIES WITH SIGNIFICANT SUPPORT

The strategies listed below are those which have consistently over time been shown to be effective in improving spelling achievement.

. Words should be introduced in lessons because of:

.. their frequency of use in the students speaking, listening, reading, and writing;
.. the cruciality of the word or the harshness of the penalty offixed to its misspelling;
.. the permanancy of the word's use in the language; and
.. the words importance in the content of the subjects being studies at that time (McKee, 1939; E. Horn, 1960; Taylor, 1981; Stetson and Taylor, 1983).

. The number of words to be learned should be limited to a core of 2,800 to 3,000 words which will account for 95 percent or more of the total words used in students' writing as opposed to the 5,000 to 6,000 words that are typically included in most commercial spelling programs. (Jones, 19[illegible]; E. Horn, 1924; Fitzgerald, 1931; E. Horn, 1960).

. Pretesting prior to instruction is a teaching principle that is many years old (Petty, 1969). This principle is critical not only on a weekly basis (e.g., pretesting on Monday prior to instruction) but pretesting is also important to determine the specific grade level textbook that is most appropriate for each student. Placing all students of the same grade level in the same textbook violates the principle of individual differences. Although there are as many individual differences in spelling within any given classroom, most teachers never attempt to place students in spelling instruction based on their individual abilities or needs. Yet these same teachers would never place all of these same students in the same reader regardless of their individual abilities and/or needs in reading.

. Publishers of spelling programs make little or no provisions for individual differences. Because of the nature of most teachers' guides, teachers are encouraged to keep students together, to ignore the pretest principle, and to believe that all students need to study the same words whether known or not.

. The self-corrected test is, perhaps, the single greatest contribution to spelling achievement (T. Horn, 1946; Tyson, 1953; Hollinggsworth, 1966; Fitzsimmons and Loomer, 1978). The self-corrected test is where the student:

.. writes the word to be learned;
.. receives immediate feedback on the correct spelling of the word either from the teacher or by looking at the word printed correctly on the board or on a card, and;
.. immediately rewriting that word correctly if misspelled the first time.

. The single best method for studying words to be learned is based on research supporting a visual imagery and visual memory approach. Therefore, to study words, students should:

.. look at the word;
.. pronounce the word;
.. cover visualize the word;
.. cover and write the word;
.. uncover and check for accuracy, and
.. recycle the process, if necessary (Fitzgerald, 1951, Williams, 1979; Burtin, 1980; Taylor, 1981; Stetson, 1984b).

. Students should concentrate on the spelling of the particular word to be learned by studying the word in its gestalt form (whole word) and by studying the structural clusters (resembling syllables) rather than trying to spell phonetically or the way the word sounds. There appears to be no logical reason to teach students to learn a variety of different ways to spell a speech sound (the most common practice in current spelling programs) because, a) most sounds have several possible spellings, b) the majority of words have silent letters, c) one-sixth of the words have double consonant letters, d) unstressed syllables, usually containing the schwa, are very difficult to spell by sound, and any rule can be used incorrectly as well as correctly. (E. Horn, 1960).

A PERSPECTIVE ON SPELLING INSTRUCTION

Attempting to place these controversial strategies into proper perspective, Stetson (1984) developed a theoretical framework for evaluating spelling approaches. Stetson claims that spelling programs can be classified into one of three theoretical categories: subskill, holistic, and eclectic.

Subskill spelling instruction is based on the assumption that there is a hierarchically ordered phonome-grapheme rule system which, when correctly used, yields correct spelling. Studies by Hanna and Moore (1953) and Hanna and Hanna (1965) have

been credited as having produced some of the more elaborate arguments for the learning of the 203 or more rules governing the 500 or more different ways to spell the 44 speech sounds using the 26 letters of the alphabet.

Holistic spelling, according to Stetson, is analogous to the "look-say" strategies in reading and is based on the look, pronounce, visualize, write, and check principle espoused in the 1900's by E. Horn, again in the 1950's by Fitzgerald, and more recently by Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1978), Williams (1979) Boutin (1980), Taylor (1981), Boutin and Stetson (1982), Taylor and Stetson (1982), and Phelps-Terasaki, Phelps-Gunn, and Stetson (1983). Proponents of holistic spelling claim that the number of rules introduced by subskill spelling programs have gotten out of hand, that good and bad spellers alike do not spell using rules, that only five or six rules apply consistently enough to be taught, and that if the same amount of time spent learning rules could be spent on the direct study of words, spelling achievement would be higher.

Eclectic spelling approaches typically contain elements of both subskill and holistic theories but not necessarily the more important elements from each. Stetson (1984) repeats the caution expressed by Harris and Hodges (1981) who warned that "often, an eclectic approach or method implies no method at all in that pieces and parts of many programs (or approaches) may be taken up or dropped from an approach with no overriding philosophy or sequence". (p.98).

In retrospect it should be noted that most of those spelling strategies identified previously which were labeled as "lacking support" should also be labeled as "subskill" strategies. Those strategies listed as having research support should be labeled as "holistic" strategies. Stetson makes it clear that while subskill spelling instruction generally lacks empirical support, holistic spelling instruction reveals in support and has for 80 years.

In a research report on the evaluation of 52 different spelling programs used throughout the United States, Stetson and Lyman (1981) reported that 44 of the 52 programs were either subskill or eclectic in philosophy and that only one program at the elementary level (Woodruff and Moore, 1980) was exemplary of the holistic spelling approach.

In summarizing the literature of the past 80 years it could be stated that, when spelling instruction is reduced to the critical factors, effective spelling instruction may be as simple as Fitzgerald's (1951) conclusions. Spelling is looking at the word, pronouncing the word, visualizing the word with the eyes closed, covering and writing the word, self-correcting the spelling immediately, and repeating the process when necessary. If so, the overwhelming majority of students in this country are learning to spell using commercially produced programs that are subskill or eclectic in philosophy and that involve students in many exercises or activities that are language arts in nature which are not supported by research. These same programs are adopted by the majority of schools whose teachers ultimately adopt the philosophy of that program. These programs are selected not based on sound educational practice but rather on the teachers philosophy generated because these teachers, believe in what they have used in the past with no cause to question.

Furthermore, programs that bask in research support are hard to find in print and rarely appear in the classroom. Because of this, teachers are not informed of the research, have little data on which to base their theories, believe in and teach instrucitonal strategies to their students which they themselves do not use, and spend the majority of their instructional time teaching non-spelling activities.

RESEARCH ON SPELLING EFFECTIVENESS IN THE STATE OF TEXAS

During the first half of the century, the University of Iowa was considered the mecca for research on spelling. Many of the nationally renowned researchers such as E. Horn, T. Horn, Paul Mekee, Greene, Fitzsimmons, and Loomer conducted dozens of research studies at that university. During the past five to eight years, however, more research has been conducted at the University of Houston on spelling effectiveness than any other university in the country. Since 1979 alone, no less than seven doctorial dissertations and 15 research studies have been reported.

It is the intent here to summarize those research studies completed in Texas that add to the rationale for the need to train teachers in spelling. It will be shown that 1) the five adopted spelling programs in Texas are based on the subskill approach, 2) research in Texas comparing the effects of 16 holistic and subskill approaches on spelling achievement has always favored holistic spelling, 3) the words selected by publishers for inclusion in spelling books at various grade levels are too easy for the large porportion of the students in Texas, and 4) spelling achievement among students at the middle and secondary level declines rapidly between the eighth and twelfth grade levels.

SPELLING BOOKS IN TEXAS

Based on Stetson's classification system for spelling programs, Stetson and Boutin (1982) developed the SPELLING PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS RATING SCALE (SPERS) which was designed to identify 36 different components of a spelling program (both the teacher's guide and the student materials) and to rate each component as "subskill" or "holistic in nature". Each component was then awarded two points and placed on either the subskill or holistic scale. Ultimately the 72 points awarded were distributed between the subskill and holistic scale such that the program could be classified as either 1) heavily weighted toward the holistic scale, 2) heavily weighted toward the subskill scale, or 3) distributed between both subskill and holistic scales which would classify that program as eclectic.

Stetson and Boutin then evaluated 11 spelling programs published for grades one through eight. Of the 11 programs, only two programs received a higher rating on the holistic scale than on the subskill scale. Of the 36 components evaluated in these two holistic programs, from 53 to 83 percent of those components were determined to be holistic in nature. Of the remaining nine programs, all nine were more heavily weighted toward the subskill scale. Five of the nine programs, however, were rated as "eclectic" due to the fact that 39 to 44 percent of the components were classified as being holistic in nature and from 56 to 61 percent of the components were classified as being subskill in nature. In other words, the strategies and activities among these five programs were somewhat divided between subskill and holistic even though all five programs contained more activities that were subskill than were holistic.

The four remaining programs were so heavily weighted on the subskill scale that they were classified as subskill in nature because from 69 to 86 percent of the strategies evaluated were subskill in nature while only 14 to 31 percent of the activities were holistic in nature.

Stetson and Boutin concluded from their study that all five of the spelling programs adopted for use in Texas were either subskill or eclectic in nature. Since the research on spelling effectiveness generally supports the holistic approach, Stetson and Boutin were led to conclude that the students in Texas were instructed for the most part using strategies that are not considered to be research supported.

EFFECTS OF SPELLING APPROACH ON ACHIEVEMENT

Two major studies were conducted in Texas school districts to determine the degree to which spelling achievement was affected by subskill and holistic instruction. In both studies, those students whose instruction was based on holistic strategies achieved significantly better scores in spelling than those whose instruction was based on subskill strategies.

Study Number One

In the first study, Boutin (1979) conducted among 541 second grade students in six elementary schools of the Spring Branch Independent School District, students were randomly divided into two groups. The control groups (C Groups) were taught by teachers who agreed to use the adopted spelling text of the district (Kottmeyer and Claus, 1976) in the manner in which the program was designed except that the weekly pretests were administered on Monday of each week rather than on Wednesday or Thursday as suggested by the teacher's guide. The experimental groups (E Groups) were taught the same vocabulary as the control students (taken from the lessons in the second grade basal spelling text), but were taught the words using the Stetson Reading-Spelling Approach (SRSA) which was designed by Stetson (1984) as a holistic approach based on Fitzgerald's (1951) conclusions that words to be learned should be looked at and pronounced, covered and pronounced, covered and written, uncovered and checked for accuracy. A full description of the SRSA is contained in Appendix 9.

All Control and Experimental students received 15 minutes of instruction per day or 75 minutes per week. Data collected on all C and E students included 1) the Monday pretest and Friday posttest scores for each of the eight weeks, 2) scores on equivalent forms of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) administered prior to and after the conclusion of the eight week study and 3) scores on a long-range spelling retention test administered prior to and following the eight week study, and composed of 30 words randomly selected taken from the eight weekly word lists.

Results of this study showed:

- When considering all students together, students receiving holistic spelling instruction made greater gains in weekly spelling six of the eight weeks, four of which reached significance at the .001 level of confidence. When the top twenty percent of the achievers were removed from the sample due to their extremely high pretest scores, those whose instruction was holistically based made greater gains seven of the eight weeks.

- On the long-range spelling retention test of words learned during the eight week study, those students in the experimental group remembered more words between the pre and posttest.

. On the Iowa Test of Basic Skills administered before and after the treatment period, there were no significant differences between pre and posttests for either group and no significant differences between either group at the pretest or the posttest levels. The most facinating observation from this study was the discovery that, of the 30 words contained on the standardized spelling test (ITBS), only two words were included in the eight lessons taught during the study. It was also noted that students currently identified an average of 21 out of 30 words on the pretests and 23 out of 30 on the posttest, an increase of only two words. It was suggested, at that time by Boutin, that one of the reasons there were no significant increases on the ITBS, was that students' real growth in spelling as measured by the other tests was not adequately reflected on the standardized test because the words on that test did not include words taught. Based on the holistic theory of spelling, the learning of one word does not insure the knowledge of any other word even those with the same sounds. Therefore, performance on an achievement test may not reflect growth in spelling unless the words on the test are among those taught.

Study Number Two

A second study was conducted in the Pasadena Independent School District by Taylor (1981) among 1,345 students in grades one, two, and three enrolled in four elementary schools. The design was similar to Boutin's study, with three exceptions. First, the study was extended to 12 weeks rather than eight. Second, the achievement test selected was the Wide Range Achievement Test, a written spelling test that, according to the literature, is the most accurate predictor of overall spelling ability. Third, the subskill program used by the C Group was the Harbrace Spelling Program (Madden and Carlson, 1974). The 29 C classes spent 15 minutes per day in their adopted basal spelling text with the exception that the pretest was administered on Monday rather than on Wednesday. The 26 E classes learned the same words as the C students except that they learned to spell their words using the SRSA designed by Stetson.

Results of the Taylor study were as follows:

. Both C and E students made significant gains between the Monday pretest and the Friday posttest every week of the 12 week study. However, gains made by the E students were significantly greater than the gains of the C students 11 of the 12 weeks. While C students learned an average of 1.4 words per week, E students learned an average of 2.6 words per week.

. On the long-range test of spelling retention constructed by Taylor using 48 words randomly selected from the 12 lessons, both C and E groups made significant gains in spelling retention over the 12 weeks. However, the gains of the E students were significantly greater than those of the C students in all three grades. On the standardized test in spelling, the Wide Range Achievement Test, there were no significant differences between the gains of the C and the E groups. However, both C and E groups made significant gains between the pre and posttest. I'm reacting to Boutin's concern about the standardized tests. Taylor found that words on the WRAT were included in the 12 lessons among the three grades and that this difference may have accounted for the significant gains for both groups, a conclusion embraced heavily by those supporting holistic spelling.

In summary, both studies comparing the subskill approach (traditional basal spelling program) with the holistic approach found similar results. In both studies students using holistic spelling methods made greater gains than those using subskill strategies not only on weekly spelling tests but on long range tests of spelling retention. When achievement in spelling was measured with a written spelling test and when a large number of words on the achievement test were also included in the instructional program gains were significant for both groups. These results added to the body of knowledge collected at the national level suggesting that teacher training in holistic methods might be important since most basal spellers did not identify nor encourage the use of spelling strategies that were holistic in nature.

APPROPRIATENESS OF WORDS IN SPELLING PROGRAMS

A major concern among researchers in Texas has been whether or not words introduced in spelling programs at the various grade levels are at the appropriate level of difficulty for students using those materials. Three different studies conducted in Texas have shown that a large number of words contained in the various programs are too easy for a large percentage of the population and too difficult for another large percentage of students. (Boutin, 1980, Taylor, 1981; Loveless, 1983).

In the Boutin (1980) study 541 second graders took a total of 3,471 Monday pretest, prior to instruction, over an eight week period of time. On these tests, students scored 80 percent or higher on 1,601 (46%) of the 3,471 total pretest taken. In other words in almost one-half of the cases, students were scoring so high on the pretest that instruction on such words was highly questionable. Those students scoring 80 percent or higher on the pretests missed a maximum of 2 words on and, therefore, spent 75 minutes each week learning those two words.

In contrast, of those students who scored less than 80 percent on the Monday pretests, they knew an average of only 48.1% out of a possible 11 words at the beginning of each week. These same students learned an average of 4.2 words each week and scored an average of 86.4 percent on the Friday posttests or 9.5 out of a possible 11 words.

In terms of amount learned, the higher achievers learned less than two words per week while the lower achieving students learned 4.2 words even though all students spent the same amount of time studying. This is a sad commentary on keeping high achievers from learning at their potential.

Similar results were found by Taylor in her study of 1981. Of the 1,345 students in her study, 389 students (36%) scored 80 percent or higher on their weekly Monday pretests. On the long-range test of spelling retention made up of 48 words, randomly selected from the 12 weekly lessons, there were significant differences in the pretest performance between those students considered to be in the bottom third, middle one-third, and top one-third in spelling achievement. The Table 2.1 illustrates the mean percentage of words spelled correctly on the long range spelling retention test administered prior to the beginning of the 12 study.

There are several important observations about the students' abilities in spelling.

. Words in the basal spelling books got easier at each grade for students of all ability levels. For example, when combining all ability levels,

TABLE 2.1

Mean Numbers of Words Spelled Correctly On The 48 Word Pretest of Spelling Words Randomly Selected From The 12 Weekly Units - Taken Prior To The Beginning Of The Study

GRADE LEVEL	N	SPELLING ACHIEVEMENT LEVELS		
		BOTTOM ONE-THIRD	MIDDLE ONE-THIRD	TOP ONE-THIRD
		Words Correct	Words Correct	Words Correct
1	437	7.4 (15%)	26.2 (55%)	36.6 (76%)
2	440	20.0 (42%)	32.2 (67%)	40.8 (85%)
3	448	27.2 (57%)	39.9 (83%)	45.4 (95%)

first graders knew 23.5 (49%) of the words prior to instruction; second graders knew 31.2 (65%); third graders knew 37.4 (78%) of the 48 words prior to instruction. Therefore, with each increasing grade, the words became more and more easy for that population, meaning that the words were less appropriate with each passing grade.

- If Stetson's suggested criteria for appropriateness is applied (i.e., students are at the appropriate level of difficulty when their score on a pretest prior to instruction ranges from 40 to 70 percent), the following conclusions can be drawn:

  - The top one-third achievers at all three grade levels, as well as, the middle one-third achievers at the third grade level were operating in a program at their independent level, were studying words that were generally too easy, and may have been wasting a great deal of time studying words already known to them. In this case, 597 (44.4%) of the 1,345 students studied materials too easy for them.

  - Only four of the nine groups identified in the Table 2.1 were placed in appropriate materials: the middle one-third achievers of the first and second grades and the bottom one-third achievers of the second and third grades. This group of 595 students (44.2%) met the criteria of knowing between 40 and 70 percent of the words prior to instruction and were, therefore, at the appropriate instructional level.

  - One group of 152 first graders, the bottom one-third achievers, scored so low on the pretest (15% correct), they would be considered as operating at too much of a frustration level.

  - At every grade level there were wide ranges of difficulty between the bottom one-third and the top one-third achievers.

The findings of Boutin and Taylor suggest that there may be serious problems in the procedures publishers use to determine the specific grade level at which words are initially introduced into spelling programs. Several publishers were polled in an attempt to clarify this issue. Two methods were used to obtain this information. The first method was to examine the teacher's guides to see if the publisher's methods for grade determination were identified. Of the 11 programs examined, not one publisher explained their method for selecting words other than to list several vocabulary studies that were used in compiling their spelling list.

Of the many word lists mentioned, only one list, The New Iowa Spelling Scale, (Greene, 1954) actually reported on a national study to determine the ease or difficulty of words at the various grade levels, two through eight. In the Greene study, 5,507 words were given to thousands of students in grades two through eight. At each grade level item difficulties were reported. Therefore, most publishers used the results of this major study to determine the grade placement of their vocabulary. Unfortunately this study was conducted 30 years ago in 1954.

Loveless (1983) reviewed the literature and found that the Greene study had never been replicated or challenged. Therefore, she determined to find out whether or not students in 1983 could spell as well as students in 1954. She randomly

TABLE 2.2

A Comparison Spelling Ability For
818 Words Spelled in 1953 and Again In
1983 By 1,381 Second, Fourth and Eighth Graders

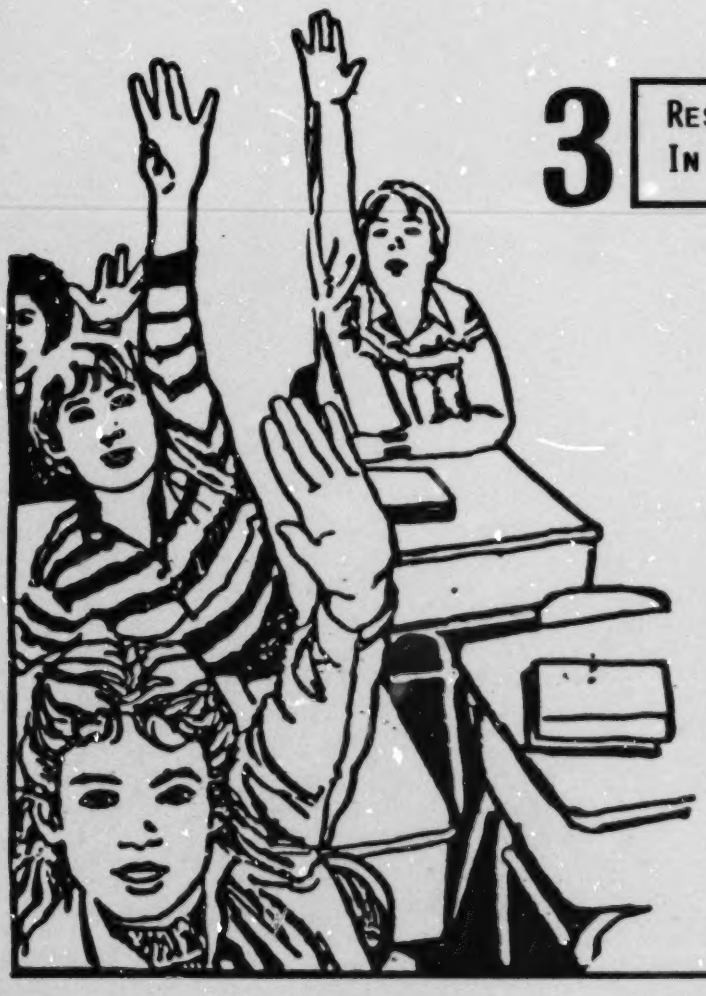
DIFFERENCE IN DIFFICULTY BETWEEN 1953 and 1983	GRADE 2	GRADE 4	GRADE 8
Words Easier to Spell in 1983	716 words 88%	669 words 82%	548 words 67%
Words More Difficult To Spell in 1983	31 words 3%	129 words 16%	201 words 25%
Words At The Same Level of Difficulty in 1983 and 1953	71 words 8%	20 words 2%	69 words 7%

selected 818 words from the Greene list of 5,507 words and asked 1,381 students enrolled in Texas schools at three grade levels to spell the words. Table 2.2 summarizes the number of words at each grade level that were easier to spell, harder to spell, and of equal difficulty. When compared with students writing the same words in 1953.

It is clear from Table 2.2 that students at all three levels in Texas schools spelled the overwhelming majority of the 818 words more easily than did students in the same grade levels writing the same words in the 1953 study. The results of this study not only corroborated the findings of Boutin and Taylor but gave clear warning to publishers that the methods used for determining grade placement of spelling words may be totally inappropriate at least for students in Texas schools if not for students throughout the country.

In conclusion, the studies of Boutin, Taylor, and Loveless have raised serious questions about the appropriateness of the words found in the basal spelling programs adopted in the State of Texas. In all three studies involving more than 3,000 students in grades one, two, three, four, and eight, the evidence appears clear that, at every grade level, the words selected by publishers may not be appropriate for the vast majority of students in our schools. In fact, it is likely that most of the students in Texas schools are being held back from their ability to learn to spell at a far more rapid rate. The continued practice of publishers to avoid the pretest in spelling has kept our teachers in the dark about the true spelling ability of their students.

3 Research On Spelling Instruction In Region V Area Schools



3 Research On Spelling Instruction In Region V Area Schools

Introduction

Through the cooperation of the Region V Education Service Center and the consultation of Dr. Elton Stetson, Associate Professor at the University of Houston, University Park, two major research studies were undertaken in order to determine whether, the beliefs and practices of classroom teachers in the Region V area of Texas were similar to beliefs and practices of teachers in other areas of the country.

The first study was conducted to determine how teachers actually taught spelling and what they believed about some of the spelling strategies that are supported or not supported by research. The second study was conducted to determine the strategies teachers actually used themselves when they spell and then to compare the strategies actually used with the strategies they teach. The conclusions from these two studies were that: 1) 85% of elementary teachers use a basal spelling program; 2) teachers basically believe in the strategies include in their spelling books; 3) the majority of the strategies supported by teachers are subskill in nature; 4) teachers, however, use holistic methods much more often subskill methods when they personally spell words; therefore, 5) what teachers actually believe about how they spell and the strategies they teach their students to use are, in fact, in conflict with the strategies they personally use when spelling words. Details on the two studies are reported here.

STUDY ONE: TEACHERS' PERSONAL BELIEFS VERSUS THEIR TEACHING PRACTICES

The first study was designed to survey teachers in Region V schools to determine how they teach spelling and what they believe about spelling instruction.

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Two survey instruments were developed by Laurent and Stetson (Appendix 16 and Appendix 17), one for teachers using a basal spelling program and one for teachers who teach spelling but who do not use a published program. The survey consisted of three parts. Part I contained questions about how teachers used their spelling tests. Part II identified nine different spelling strategies to which the teachers were asked to agree or disagree. Part III asked teachers to respond to questions concerning the overall effectiveness of the program they used.

RESPONDANTS

A total of 600 surveys were mailed out early in the spring of 1984. A total of 270 surveys were returned of which 230 were completed by teachers who used locally adopted spelling basals and 40 of which were from teachers who did not use a basal program. Table 2.3 illustrates the distribution of the 230 teachers who use a basal spelling text.

TABLE 2.3
DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTARY
TEACHERS USING A BASAL SPELLING TEXT

GRADE LEVEL	NO. OF RESPONDANTS
1	41
2	54
3	53
4	43
5	35
6	4
TOTAL	230

The 230 teachers had accumulated a total of 2,974 years of teaching experience or an average of 12.9 years per teacher.

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Results of the entire survey is reported in Appendix . However, a few highlights are listed below:

- 79% of the teachers follow the recommended procedures in the teacher's guide.
- 70% of the teachers state that they believe their spelling program is adequate for their students.

- 86% of the teachers actually administer the pretest or trial test after Monday and after instruction, a strategy not supported by the research.

- Only 14% of the teachers actually administer the pretest on Monday prior to instruction, a strategy supported by research.

- 81% of the teachers stated they believe that a pretest should not be administered prior to instruction, only after instruction, a strategy generally not supported by the research.

- Of those teachers administering the pretest, 72% of them reported that the pretests are corrected by the teacher or the pretests are exchanged among students for correction, a strategy not supported by the research.

- 83% of the teachers stated they believe that the words in the spelling lessons should all have a common sound that may be spelled different ways (e.g., eight, ate, say, prey, etc.), a strategy not supported by the research.

- 90% of the teachers agreed that learning to spell by learning the rules governing the spelling of words is an effective method, a strategy not suppoted by the research.

- 84% of the teachers stated they believe that studying the meaning of words aids in spelling words, a strategy not supported by the research.

- 77% of the teachers stated they believe in sentence dictation, a strategy not supported by the research.

- 85% of the teachers state they believe in the look-say-write-check method, a strategy that is supported by the research.

DISCUSSION

It should be noted that teachers believe and strongly so, in the strategies presented in their spelling programs, regardless of whether those strategies are supported by the research or lack support. In one case, teachers supported two particular strategies diametrically opposite philosophically. For example, 90% of the teachers stated they believed that learning the rules of spelling is an effective spelling strategy (subskill method). At the same time 91% of the same teachers stated that the look-say-write-correct method was "the most" effective strategy for learning to spell (holistic method).

Perhaps teachers supported both views simply because both methods were included in the five textbooks adopted in Texas. Examination of the spelling books showed that all five programs focused on the introduction of one specific rule in each lesson and the words in each lesson were examples of the spelling pattern exemplified by that rule. On the other hand all of the programs also included one page in the front of the student's book containing an explanation of how students could self-study their words. These explanations always resembled a look-say-write and self-correct strategy. This may have accounted for the reason that teachers believed in both strategies.

It is important to note that, in spite of the one page explanation to students on using the look-say-write and self-correct holistic strategy, it seldom appeared in any of the lessons and the teachers' guides rarely recommended its use in any of their lesson plans or even suggested that students be encouraged to use that strategy on their own. Therefore, it seems that teachers may believe in strategies for spelling instruction because they are in the book.

STUDY TWO: TEACHERS' PERSONAL BELIEFS AND HABITS FOR SPELLING

Study Two was designed to assess the personal beliefs of teachers toward spelling instruction and to assess their actual spelling habits. Three questions were generated in order to address this study:

QUESTION ONE

Do good and poor adult spellers differ in their stated belief about the teaching of spelling?

QUESTION TWO

Do good and poor adult spellers differ in the strategies they consider as most important and least important when they spell themselves?

QUESTION THREE

Do good and poor adult spellers differ in how they actually spell difficult words?

POPULATION AND DESIGN

The answers to the above questions were sought during the summer of 1984 when Region V sponsored five all-day workshops on spelling instruction conducted in five communities within the Region V area. A total of 450 teachers participated in these workshops conducted by Dr. Elton Stetson, Associate Professor, University of Houston, University Park. At the beginning of each workshop, a 17 statement true-false test was administered to all teachers (Appendix 1). The statements all related to strategies that are considered as supported or not supported by the research. Following the completion of the test, all teachers were asked to turn their tests over and respond to three directions given by Dr. Stetson. First, teachers were asked to indicate whether they considered themselves to be good, average, or poor spellers. Second, teachers were asked to list three different strategies they normally used when attempting to write words the spelling of which is not known. Third, the teachers were asked to spell two words, rendezvous and mnemonics. Under each word they were instructed to explain how they decided on the particular spelling of each word. The tests were taken anonymously and turning the tests in was on a voluntary basis. Of the 450 teachers who took the test, 294 were turned in. The distribution of the returned tests among good, average, and poor spellers is identified below:

GOOD SPELLERS	99
AVERAGE SPELLERS	132
POOR SPELLERS	63
TOTAL	294

The answers to each of three questions were determined by analyzing the returned tests of the 99 good and 63 poor spellers.

Do good and poor adult spellers differ in their stated beliefs about the teaching of spelling?

Table 2.4 illustrates the responses of the 99 good and 63 poor spellers on 10 of the 17 true-false questions. The 10 statements selected were those for which research appears clearly available.

TABLE 2.4

Good And Poor Spellers Evaluation Of Ten True-False Statements Regarding Spelling Instruction

STATEMENT	NUMBER OF GOOD SPELLERS IN AGREEMENT	NUMBER OF POOR SPELLERS IN AGREEMENT
1. Students are better spellers if they learn the meaning of the words they are spelling.	N = 51 (52%)	N = 46 (73%)
2. Learning the rules of spelling is an effective spelling strategy.	N = 48 (49%)	N = 38 (60%)
3. Sentence dictation is an effective method of teaching spelling.	N = 39 (39%)	N = 24 (38%)
4. Learning to spell syllables is as effective as learning to spell the whole word.	N = 63 (64%)	N = 45 (71%)
5. Studying words which have the same sound spelled different ways is effective (e.g., bare, bear).	N = 42 (42%)	N = 26 (41%)
6. Writing words correctly from the dictionary spelling is an effective spelling strategy.	N = 20 (20%)	N = 21 (33%)
7. Test-study-test is the single most effective technique to improve ones spelling ability.	N = 45 (46%)	N = 30 (47%)
8. Student correcting their own spelling test is an effective spelling strategy.	N = 77 (78%)	N = 48 (76%)
9. Standardized tests in spelling adequately measure students' spelling achievement.	N = 22 (22%)	N = 11 (18%)
10. Textbook adopted in Texas incorporate the most effective research-based methods.	N = 17 (17%)	N = 13 (21%)

Good and Poor Spellers Generally Agree

From the results of the survey, it was determined that good and poor spellers generally agree about their personal beliefs concerning how spelling should be taught. On six of the ten true-false statements there was close agreement and of the remaining four statements, there was general agreement. The six statements on which there was close agreement are itemized below:

1. 38% of the good and 39% of the poor spellers agreed with statement #3 that sentence dictation is a good spelling strategy. Research generally does not support this strategy. Therefore, approximately 60% of the teachers agree with the research findings. In Study One reported earlier, 77% of the teachers polled used sentence dictation on a regular basis. These findings suggested that teachers tend to administer sentence dictation even though the majority disagree with the practice.

2. About 40% of both good and poor spellers agreed with statement #5 that learning the different ways to spell the same speech sound is a good spelling strategy. Therefore, 60% did not agree with this strategy, nor does research support such a strategy. Again, if the results of Study One and Study Two are compared, 83% of teachers use this strategy on a regular basis even though 60% do not agree that the strategy is effective. An examination of the five adopted spellers in Texas show that all five programs use this strategy on a regular basis in that many of the lessons contain words all having the same sound but spelled in different ways (e.g., bare, bear, etc.).

3. About one-half of the teachers (46% of the good and 47% of the poor spellers) agreed with statement #7 that the test-study-test method is an effective strategy. Research supports this strategy heavily in the literature. Yet, in Study One, only 9% of the teachers polled actually administered a pretest prior to instruction. Once again it appears that teachers may not administer a pretest prior to instruction simply because the majority of programs discourage the use of pretesting prior to instruction.

4. 78% of the good and 76% of the poor spellers agreed with statement #11 that spelling tests that are self-correct by the student taking the test that are self-correct by the student taking the test is a good strategy. In spite of the fact that two-thirds of the teachers agreed and, in spite of the fact that research provides overwhelming support for such a strategy, only 44 teachers (19%) of the 230 polled in Study One claimed that they allowed students to self-correct their own pretests. The remaining teaches (81%) either corrected them or had students exchange and correct. Again, few program ever discuss the benefits of self-corrected tests.

5. Only 22% of the good and 18% of the poor spellers agreed with statement #14 that standardized tests adequately measure students' spelling achievement. Those 80% of teachers who disagree with the statement have a great deal of support from the research. A recent thorough review of the literature on

testing in spelling by McNaughton (1982) showed that most spelling tests are multiple choice and, therefore, are tests of proofreading or reading ability more than tests of spelling ability. In a more recent study by Stetson (1984), he found that very few of the words on standardized test can also be found in the spelling programs of the same grade level. Stetson and McNaughton both agree that any standardized test in spelling must meet at least two criteria. First, the words on the test must be selected from the large pool of words contained in the spelling program. Second, the test must require that students write the words from dictation. Yet, all schools continue to measure students spelling achievement by administering the multiple choice tests.

6. The very small group of good and poor spellers (17% of the good and 21% of the poor) agreed with statement #17 that the spelling textbooks adopted in Texas incorporated the most effective research-based methods for the teaching of spelling. Yet, in spite of the fact that about 80% of the teachers did not think that their textbooks contained the best research-supported strategies, 70.3% of the teachers in Study One felt that their spelling program was an effective tool for teaching spelling.

Good and Poor Spellers Differ Slightly

When evaluating the teachers' responses to the six statements discussed above, good and poor spellers did not differ in their agreement of disagreement more than four percentage points. Of the four remaining statements, good and poor spellers differed more dramatically from each other even though their opinions were generally in the same direction of agreement or disagreement. Each of these statements is discussed below.

1. While a little over one-half (52%) of the good spellers agreed that studying word meanings is an aid to spelling, almost two-third (73%) of the poor spellers agreed. When combining both good and poor spellers on this issue, a total of 60% agree that studying word meaning is an effective strategy. However, the research on this issue shows clearly that, for the most part, the study of word meaning is a waste of time. While there are a few exceptions where meaning is necessary (e.g., bare, bear, etc.), knowledge of word meaning provides few clues to the spelling of words. Most authorities agree that students should be taught to spell only words whose meanings are known and used in students' speaking and listening vocabulary. Any cursory look at spelling texts will convince the examiner that the words introduced at any grade level have been used by the students in their other communication skills for years. As E. Horn (1960) concluded, most of the words in spelling programs are those already used by children in their writing which means that the words are familiar to the students. Therefore, "the arbitrary practice of teaching the meaning of each words is...a wasteful practice (p.1346)." Unfortunately, all five spelling programs in Texas spend a considerable amount of students time with activities dealing primarily with word meaning.

2. About one-half (49%) of the good spellers and 60% of the poor spellers agreed that learning the rules of spelling aids good spelling. In all, more than half (54%) of the teachers supported the learning of spelling rules even though research considers such a practice highly questionable. Perhaps the reason so many teachers tend to support this strategy is that all five of the Texas adopted spellers emphasizes the learning of rules in each and every lesson of the text.

3. Good and poor spellers differed only slightly in their agreement that learning to spell syllables is as effective as learning to spell the whole word. In this case 64% of the good spellers and 71% of the poor spellers agreed with the value of studying syllables. This may be one area in which the teachers' opinions and recent research are in agreement in spite of the fact that very few spelling programs emphasize the learning of word parts or syllables. Some of the earlier studies by T. Horn (1947) and Humphrey (1954) raised questions about the effectiveness of this strategy. However, in both of these studies there appeared to be little difference in overall spelling ability between those whose programs emphasized the study of word parts and those whose program emphasized the study of the whole word. More recent studies by Williams (1978), Boutin (1980), and Taylor (1981) provided great support for using the combined whole word and the word part (syllable) method for studying words. Incidently, none of the adopted programs place much if any emphasis on studying word parts or syllables.

4. Very few good spellers (20%) but a significantly larger number of poor spellers (33%) agree that having students translate phonetic or dictionary spelling of words to the regular or acceptable spelling is a good strategy. This is another area in which the overwhelming majority of teachers are in agreement with the research which finds no support whatsoever for the use of such a strategy. Thankfully, only one of the five spelling programs in Texas supports such a strategy. There appears to be no justification for presenting students with words that are incorrectly spelled. In fact the practice of presenting two alternative spellings of a word, only one of which could ever be correct, would accomplish little other than to confuse the writer who, under the pressure of writing, may remember the phonetic spelling rather than the acceptable spelling. Only one of the five programs in Texas subscribes to such an unjustifiable procedure. However, that one program appears to be adopted by more school districts in Texas than any other program.

Summary

To summarize the answer to Question #1, good and poor spellers have similar views on the 10 true and false statements outlined above. When good spellers agreed with a strategy or statement (e.g., statements 1,2,4, and 8), the poor spellers agreed with the statement to the same degree. When good spellers disagreed with statements (e.g., statements 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10), poor spellers also disagreed to a similar degree. On six of the ten items, the difference in the responses between good and poor spellers did not vary more than four

percentage points. On the four remaining items, the only difference in the response was in the degree of their agreement or disagreement. On these four items, the poor spellers always agreed to a greater extent than the good spellers. This might indicate that poor spellers are a bit more gullible.

Finally, on seven of the statements (statements 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, and 10) the beliefs of the teachers were supported by the research literature. On three of the statements (statements 1, 2, and 7), the beliefs of the teachers were not supported by research. It should be of concern that 60% of the teachers believe in teaching word meaning (statement #1) when the literature finds little such support. Likewise, 53% of the teachers believe in teaching rules (statement #2) when most research refutes the value of such a practice. Finally, only 46% of the teachers supported pretesting prior to instruction (statement #7) when the research provides overwhelming support for the test-study-test method.

Do good and poor spellers agree on the spelling that they personally use most often?

The same 99 good spellers and 63 poor spellers who rated the ten items as true or false were also asked to list the three spelling strategies they personally used most often when they wanted to write a word whose spelling they did not know.

Strategies Used By Good Spellers

The 99 good spellers provided a total of 286 responses which are itemized in order of use in Table 2.5.

The four strategies identified as used most often and consuming 83.1% of the 286 responses are: (1) using the dictionary, (2) writing the word by visualizing its spelling, (3) spelling the word based on its sounds, and (4) spelling the syllables. Of these four strategies, only dictionary practice is found on a regular basis in the five spellers used in Texas. The four strategies identified as least often used by good spellers which accounted for less than 5% of the 286 responses included: (1) substituting another word, (2) using rules for spelling, (3) remembering another word with similar sounds or similar spelling patterns, and (4) using word meaning to aid spelling. Yet, two of these four strategies (using rules and meaning) are emphasized heavily throughout all five spellers in Texas.

It is most intreaguing to learn that good spellers admitted they would use rules of spelling in only 3 of the 286 times. Yet, on the true-false statements answered by these same 99 teachers, 48 teachers (49%) stated that the learning of rules was an effective strategy. Likewise, while 51 teachers (52%) agreed that learning word meaning would improve spelling, only one time (less than 1%) did a single teacher admit that they tried to use word meaning to help them spell words.

TABLE 2.5

Strategies Used By 99 Good Spellers Arranged By Frequency Of Use

STRATEGY USED	RANK	FREQUENCY	% USED
Look Word Up	1	92	32.2%
Try to Visualize Word	2	63	22.0
Spell By Sounds	3	47	16.0
Spell By Syllables	4	37	12.9
Ask Someone	5	27	9.4
Just Guess	6	8	2.8
Substitute Another Word	7	7	2.4
Try to Use Rules	8	3	1.0
Remember Known with Similar Sounds	9	1	1.0
Use Meaning	10	1	1.0
TOTALS		286	100.0%

Strategies Used By Poor Spellers

Table 2.6 presents the 172 responses listed by the 63 poor spellers arranged into the 10 categories by frequency of use.

Poor spellers listed only 8 different strategies rather than the 10 listed by good spellers. Looking the word up in the dictionary was listed most often (31.4%) Using rules and using word meaning to aid spelling were not listed by a single poor speller as a first, second, or even third possible strategy. However, on the true-false test taken earlier, 60% of these same teachers supported the effectiveness of learning rules and 73% agreed that knowing word meaning would improve spelling ability.

Discussion

Actually, there is no difference in the types of strategies used by both good and poor spellers. The only difference is in the priority of their use. When the dictionary is not available, poor spellers would rather ask someone how the word is spelled while the good spellers perfer to visualize the word, write the word and then "see" if the word looks correct. Poor spellers are more prone to substitute words, more than likely synonyms whose spelling is known. In such cases, the maturity of such writing is often lowered because the word "beautiful" is replaced with the word "pretty" and "let's meet" is used rather than "let's rendezvous".

What is absolutely clear, is that teachers and spelling programs tend to stress some strategies on a regular basis that teachers themselves simply do not use. On the other hand, teachers also use some strategies rather consistently that receive little or no coverage in traditional spelling programs (e.g., visualizing words, spelling by syllables, etc.).

Spelling the word by spelling the sounds of the word was listed as the third most often used strategy by both good and poor spellers. As will be illustrated in the next section of the report, spelling words by their sounds is one of the least effective strategies for English spelling in that less than 50% of the words in our language are spelled the way they sound. Furthermore, what most teachers describe as spelling by sounds is not really spelling by sounds. Rather, it is listening to a sound, trying to remember the various ways in which that sound can possibly be spelled, thinking of other words with the same sound whose spelling is known, trying to visualize or recall seeing the word written before and, finally, writing the word using all of these strategies with no guarantee whatsoever that the words will be spelled correctly.

Do good and poor spellers differ in the way they actually spell difficult words?

The answer to Question 3 was obtained simply by asking the 99 good and 63 poor spellers to write two words considered difficult to spell — rendezvous and mnemonics. Table 2.7 illustrates the spelling scores for the 162 teachers on the two words.

Based on Table 2.7, 28 of the 99 good spellers wrote rendezvous correctly and 6 wrote mnemonics correctly while none of the 63 poor spellers wrote either word correctly. This might suggest that teachers self perceptions of their ability to spell may be accurate, at least for those who labeled themselves

TABLE 2.6

Strategies Used By 63 Poor Spellers Arranged By Frequency Of Use

STRATEGY USED	RANK	FREQUENCY	% USED
Look Word Up	1	54	31.4
Ask Someone	2	33	19.2
Spell By Sounds	3	29	16.9
Try To Visualize Words	4	20	11.6
Substitute Another Word	5	16	9.3
Just Guess	6	12	7.0
Spell By Syllables	7	7	4.1
Remember Known Words With Similar Sounds	8	1	1.0
Try To Use Rules	9	0	0
Use Meaning	10	0	0
TOTALS		172	100 %

TABLE 2.7

Spelling Scores And Number Of Different Spellings For Two Words According To Good And Poor Spellers

	RENDEZVOUS		MNEMONICS	
	GOOD SPELLERS N = 99	POOR SPELLERS N = 63	GOOD SPELLERS N = 99	POOR SPELLERS N = 63
Number of Times Word Spelled Correctly	28 (28%)	0 (0%)	6 (6%)	0 (0%)
Number of Different Spellings For Each Word	38	48	17	27

as poor spellers. Good spellers had fewer alternative spellings of the words. While good spellers created 38 different spellings for rendezvous and 17 different spellings for mnemonics, poor speller created 48 different spellings for rendezvous and 27 for mnemonics.

Alternative Spellings For Words

Table 2.8 and 2.9 identify the more common spelling of rendezvous and mnemonics for good and poor spellers. The number of teachers using each spelling is identified in parentheses.

Good spellers not only offered fewer alternative spellings but a substantial number of these selected a limited number of different spellings. For example, 65 (66%) of the 99 good spellers offered only 4 different spelling of rendezvous while there was little agreement among poor spellers in that no more than 8 (12.7%) of the teachers spelled rendezvous the same way. For the words mnemonics, while 53 (53%) of the good spellers offered only 2 alternative spellings, only 22 poor spellers (34.9%) offered two alternative spellings.

Spelling of Words by Syllables

An analysis of the various spellings of syllables illustrates well the problems encountered when good and poor spellers attempt to write syllables that are not already known. Table 2.9 summarizes the number of different spellings for each of the syllables in rendezvous and mnemonics.

Generally, teachers spelled each of the six syllables in a variety of ways. Syllables having more plausible spellings (different ways to spell the same sound) produced a greater number of actual spellings. For example, the syllable "vous" was spelled 28 different ways and the syllable "mne" was spelled 23 different ways. An analysis of the different spelling of the six syllables is illustrated in Table 2.10. The number of teachers spelling each syllable is identified in parentheses.

What Good and Poor Spellers Stated About How They Spelled Difficult Words

Of the 28 good spellers who spelled rendezvous correctly, 23 stated they either used visual memory or they just knew the word because they had written it several times in the past. Three teachers stated they had studied French, one said he/she went to a club by that name, and one teacher stated he/she spelled it by using syllabication (spelled syllabification by the teacher).

Of course none of the 63 poor spellers spelled rendezvous or mnemonics correctly. However, there were many interesting anecdotes written by these teachers to explain the way they attempted to spell their words, even though they were incorrect. A few of the more humorous comments are shared below:

1. One teacher spelled it as it appears below:

ren-de-vuex
ren-de-vpaux
ren-de-veau
ren-de-veav } "One of these must be right."

TABLE 2.8

Different Spellings For Rendezvous
Among Teachers Identified As Good Or Poor Spellers

GOOD SPELLERS N = 99		POOR SPELLERS N = 63	
rendezvous	(28)	rendezvous	(0)
rendevous	(27)	rendevous	(8)
rondevous	(7)	rondevous	(2)
rendevoux	(3)	rendavous	(2)
** There were 34 additional different spellings, each spelled one time.		rendevouz	(2)
		rondavou	(2)
		dondeveau	(2)
		rondevue	(2)
		rundavoo	(2)
		** There were 39 additional different spellings, each spelled only one time.	

TABLE 2.9

Different Spellings For Mneumonics
Between Good And Poor Spellers

GOOD SPELLERS N = 99		POOR SPELLERS N = 63	
pneumonics	(37)	pneumonics	(14)
neumonics	(16)	nemonics	(8)
nemonics	(13)	neumonics	(7)
numonics	(7)	numonics	(5)
mnemonics	(6)	namonics	(4)
namonics	(5)	nomonics	(3)
pnemonics	(4)		
gnumonics	(2)		

** There were 9 additional different spellings, each spelled only one time.

** There were 21 additional different spellings, each spelled only one time.

TABLE 2.10

Number Of Different Spellings For
The Syllables In Rendezvous And
Mnemonics Among Teachers Identified As
Good And Poor Spellers

SYLLABLE	TOTAL NO. OF DIFFERENT SPELLINGS	DIFFERENT SPELLINGS FOR GOOD SPELLERS	DIFFERENT SPELLINGS FOR POOR SPELLERS
RENDEZVOUS			
ren	11	10	6
dez	12	9	7
vous	28	16	21
MNEMONICS			
mne	23	13	18
mon	8	3	7
ics	13	5	10

TABLE 2.11

Different Spellings For The Three Syllables In Rendezvous Among Teachers Identified As Both Good And Poor Spellers

REN (N = 11)		DEZ (N = 12)		VOUS (N = 28)		
ren	(101)	de	(80)	vous	(80)	vaue
ron	(37)	dez	(37)	vou	(15)	vao
run	(7)	da	(32)	vue	(11)	ve
ran	(7)	do	(3)	voux	(9)	veu
rhon	(3)	d	(2)	veau	(8)	vez
round	(2)	des	(2)	veaux	(5)	view
rhan		daz		vouz	(5)	vieu
raun		dae		vouze	(3)	ouz
rein		dea		vu	(3)	vo
reun		dey		veous	(3)	ouz
rion		deu		ous	(2)	uz
		di		veux	(2)	beaux
				voo		veouz
				veas		vuz

TABLE 2.12

Different Spelling For The Three Syllables In Mnemonics Among Teachers Identified As Both Good And Poor Spellers

MNE	(N = 23)		MON	(N = 8)	ICS	(N = 13)
pneu	(52)	mneu	mon	(96)	ics	(148)
neu	(24)	nau	man	(3)	ies	(2)
ne	(22)	neau	mun	(2)	tic	(2)
nu	(17)	nur	ma		ices	
na	(10)	peu	men		tics	
mne	(7)	pneo	nem		tiacs	
no	(6)	pno	mon		icks	
pne	(5)	de	nmon		daou	
phu	(4)	knu			ous	
gnu	(2)	ma			gues	
knew					it	
kneu					dic	
new					ix	

2. One teacher spelled mnemonics this way:

p n e u m o n t i c k s

The reason given for spelling the word this way was:

"I just knew it!"

3. Another teacher spelled rendezvous this way:

r e n d a v o u g h

The reason given for the above spelling was:

"I spelled it phonetically."

4. The most interesting was the teacher who wrote rendezvous six different ways, each one crossed out except for the final one which was circled:

~~rondavue~~	~~rhondevou~~
~~rendezvous~~	~~rendeavoux~~
~~randevous~~	(rondaveau)

The reason given for the above spelling was:

"I just knew how to spell rondaveau."

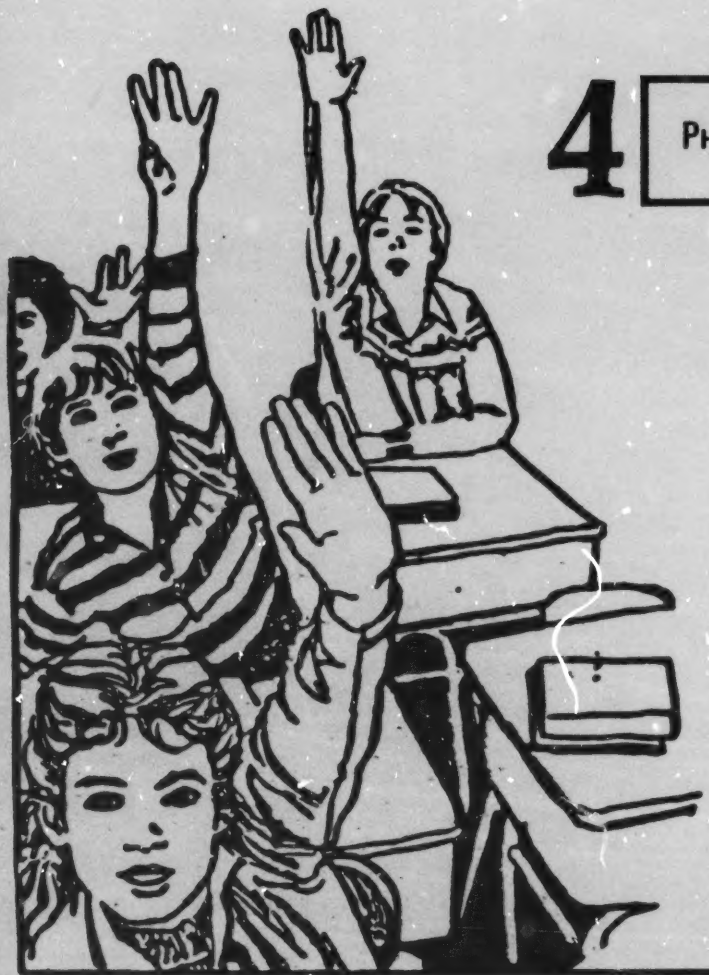
CONCLUSIONS FROM THE RESEARCH JUSTIFYING THE NEED FOR TEACHING RETRAINING

There are several conclusions that should be summarized based on the research in spelling. First, spelling programs follow one of three theoretical catagories: subskill, holistic, or eclectic. The overwhelming majority of spelling programs in the U.S. fall into the subskill or eclectic categoy, neither of which receives much support in the literature. Research on spelling effectiveness completed in Texas during the past five years has reaffirmed research conducted since the early 1900's at the national level which indicates that students exposed to holistic spelling strategies become better spellers than those taught to use subskill strategies.

Second, teachers tend to believe in the strategies appearing in the basal spelling programs available to them, not because they are sound spelling strategies possessing theoretical and empirical support, but because they are there. At the same time, teachers appear to be leery of strategies that do not appear in their textbooks even though such strategies may have a great deal of support in the research.

Third, a comparison of the personal beliefs about spelling and actual spelling practices among teachers, shows that good and poor spellers alike do not actually use the strategies they believe in the most. Teachers actually use those strategies that are most heavily supported by the research and least practiced by the commercial programs they use every day.

If classroom teachers tend to believe in the philosophy of the material in use at the time, it would seem reasonable to expect that teachers' beliefs and practices in spelling could be influenced by: 1) informing them of the research that is available, 2) altering the strategies in keeping with research literature, 3) retraining teachers to use research supported strategies and, 4) through this re-education and retraining, bring teachers beliefs and practices more in line with the literature.



4 PHASE ONE: TRAINING MODEL

4 PHASE ONE: TRAINING MODEL

Advance Preparation

As part of the regular inservice program of Region V Education Service Center, a workshop was conducted in the fall of 1983 as an awareness session concerning the most current research supported instructional spelling strategies. As result of this workshop, interest was created in knowing more about the implementation of a program to improve spelling achievement. One school district (Beaumont Independent School District) and one campus in particular, (Lincoln/Martin), indicated a desire to train teachers and implement the program. The administrators within the district gave approval to implement the program and the teachers were selected based on a volunteer system.

Step I
Central Office
Administrators Awareness Session

Central Office administrative staff (assistant superintendent for instruction, elementary and secondary directors of instruction, elementary and secondary coordinators of instruction) and the Lincoln/Martin administrative staff participated in a 3½ hour training program prior to the teacher training. The purpose of the training was to have the administrators develop an awareness of the current research and be familiar with the instructional strategies that the Experimental (E) teachers would be using. It was also hoped that with a better understanding as to why the spelling strategies were being changed, the administrators would develop an attitude of support for the teacher training and the curriculum modification being proposed.

As part of the inservice program the administrators were pre-tested on their previous knowledge of spelling strategies and current research was presented to clarify misconceptions about spelling instruction.

The 5 day teaching cycle was explained in detail and the proposed study was presented. (See Appendices 1-12)

Step II
Building Level Administrators Planning Session

The building level administrative staff from Lincoln/Martin met for a 3½ hour planning session. At this time, the teacher selection was made, the time lines for the study were developed, the forms for data collection were developed and the procedures for implementation were made.(Appendix 13, 14, 15)

It was decided that the teachers would be trained in 2-3½ hour sessions with half of the teachers attending a morning sessions and half attending an afternoon session.

It was decided that the Control (C) teachers would be given information regarding data collection of student achievement during school on their respective campuses.

Step III
Experimental Teacher Training

E Teachers were given release time for the 3½ hour training program. The program consisted of a pre-test activity to measure their prior knowledge of research based teaching strategies. Each question was then answered giving the research data to support each strategy. Teachers were then asked to compare their current spelling program and decide if what they were doing on a daily basis was validated by the literature as being effective strategies.(Appendix 1)

The teachers were then trained to use the 5 day teaching cycle and were allowed time to practice the SRSA drill. Then the teachers were given the time frame for pre-testing, instruction and post testing as well as the forms used to collect demographic on students.(Appendix 9)

The teachers were then given instruction for administering the Wide Range Achievement Test (Spelling only), and the RSVP (Spelling only). It was decided that the teachers would administer and score the tests and the consultants in the project would determine grade equivalent scores from the raw scores.(Appendix 15)

The teachers were then given information regarding the placement of students within the list of words and the procedure for collecting weekly pre/post spelling test scores. They were asked to limit their spelling activites to 20 minutes per day or 100 minutes per week. A follow-up on site visit was planned for the third week of the instructional process so that teachers could be observed using the strategies of the five day cycle and so that their individual questions could be answered regarding implementation of the program. (See Appendices 6-15)

Step IV
Control
Teachers Training

The Control teachers met for 45 minutes after school and were given minimal information regarding the study. They were told that we were collecting data to compare the basal spelling program to a new approach.

They were asked to complete the same demographic student information form and were given instructions in the administration of the Wide Range Achievement Test (Spelling only) and the RSVP (Spelling only)(Appendix 13, 14, 15).

They were asked to give a Monday pre-test over their weekly words and a Friday post test and record the number of words correct on Pre/Post Weekly Report Form for each student again. Spelling activites were to be not more than 20 minutes a day or 100 minutes per week. C teachers were given the time-line for pre-testing, and post-testing. It was agreed that the Control teachers would administer and score the tests while the consultants would record the grade equivalent scores from the raw scores. It was also agreed that the teachers would follow the instructional activities in their basal program.

SELECTION/DESCRIPTION OF THE EXPERIMENTAL CLASS

Lincoln/Martin campus is a school with 650 students ranging from ages of 4-15. It is a neighborhood school where most children walk to the campus of this inner city area of Beaumont. The ethic make-up is 99% black, 1% white and the socio-economic status of the student population is considered low income with most families being in the blue collar work force. This campus was selected for the Experimental Group because of the principal's interest in increasing student achievement and the desire of the teachers to improve the effectiveness of their classroom instruction.

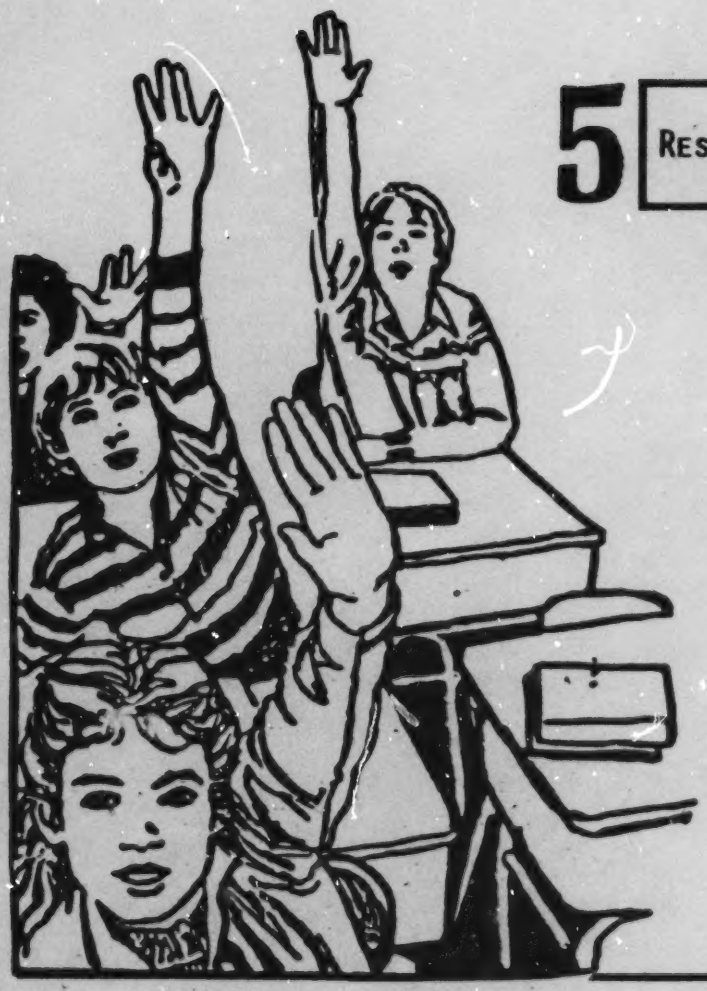
DESCRIPTION/SELECTION OF CONTROL CLASS

It was important to the study that the teaches in the Control Group not be trained in the research based instructional spelling strategies. One campus was chosen to act as Control Group for grades 1-3, another for grades 4-5 and a junior high campus was selected for students in grades 6-8. All three of these schools are within a 2 mile radius of the Experimental Campus and although the ethnic ratios are different, the students were felt to be compatible in terms of socio-economic background and status. The number of teachers and students participating the study are reported on Table 3.1.

TABLE 3.1

PARTICIPATING CLASSROOMS

Grade Level	Experimental		Control	
	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students	Number of Classrooms	Number of Students
1	1	23	1	21
2	2	52	1	24
3	1	31	2	45
4	1	18	1	19
5	1	22	2	41
6	3	63	1	20
6 Rem	1	17		
7	1	41	2	49
6-8 Sp. Ed.	1	41		
Total	**12**	**308**	**10**	**219**



5 Results and Conclusions of the Study

5 RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

OVERVIEW OF THE PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the VI-D grant was to retrain teachers to teach spelling using strategies supported by research. The purpose of this particular study, only one part of the training grant, was to investigate whether the retraining of teachers would have a positive effect on students' spelling achievement. The question to be answered was:

WILL STUDENTS INSTRUCTED BY TEACHERS TRAINED TO USE RESEARCH-SUPPORTED SPELLING STRATEGIES SPELL BETTER THAN STUDENTS WHOSE TEACHERS USE CURRENTLY ADOPTED STRATEGIES NOT SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH???

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY DESIGN

The 12 Experimental (E) and 10 Control (C) teachers all followed the identical reserach design.

Week 1 Pretesting all students using the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) and the Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Test (RSVT).

Week 2-11 Mondays: Pretesting all words in the lesson.
Tuesday - Thursday: Instruction on the words.
Friday: Posttesting all words in the lesson

Week 12 Posttesting all students using the WRAT and the RSVP (Same forms used for the pretest)

During the 10 weeks of instruction, the student in all C classes received a maximum of 100 minutes of instruction distributed as follows:

Monday: Pretesting over all words in the lesson.
Tuesday: Instruction using the adopted spelling text
Wednesday: Instruction using the adopted spelling text.
Thursday: Instruction using adopted spelling text
Friday: Posttest over all words in the lesson.

The students in all E classes also received a maximum of 100 minutes of instruction each week distributed as follows:

Monday: Pretesting all students over the 15 words in one of the 60 lessons in the 900 word Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program - RSVP (Stetson, 1984).

Tuesday: Instruction on the first 8 words in the lesson using the Stetson Reading-Spelling Approach (SRSA)

Wednesday: Instruction on the final 7 words in the lesson using the SRSA.

Thursday: With the teacher using an overhead projector, students write each of the 15 words after viewing the word flashed onto the screen for a period of no more than one second of time. After each flash of the word, students were to 1) see the word, 2) pronounce or say the word silently, 3) spell the word silently, and 4) write the word.

Friday: Posttesting all students over the 15 words of the lesson.

RESULTS

The first method for measuring the effect of teacher training on students spelling ability was to determine student growth in spelling achievement based on a typical standardized test of written spelling. In this case the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) was used. the WRAT is composed of 45 words taken from the vast pool of vocabulary available in the English language. Each word was dictated by the teacher and written by the students on a test protocol. The raw score (words correct) was converted to a grade equivalent score. Table 4.1 summarizes the mean pre and posttest grade scores for all C and E classes.

Discussion of Table 4.1

1. The 10 C classes gained an average of 2.7 months of achievement during the 2.5 months (10 weeks) of the experimental period. Since average students are normally expected to gain one month of achievement for one month of instruction, students in the C classes actually achieved 108% of their expected growth (2.7 months of actual growth divided by 2.5 months of expected growth). These results are in keeping with the McNaughton (82) and Loveless (84) studies in which both concluded that elementary students tend to reach or even exceed their expected growth when spelling instruction is regular and systematic.

2. The E classes gained an average of 4.1 months of achievement during the 2.5 months of instruction. Based on the same assumption stated in #1 above, the E classes exceeded that expectation significantly. The mean gain of 4.1 months of actual achievement exceeded the 2.5 months of expected achievement by 1.6 months. Therefore, the E classes achieved 164% of their expected growth (4.1 months of actual growth divided by 2.5 months of expected growth).

TABLE 4.1

Mean Grade Equivalent Scores and Gains on
Wide Range Achievement Test
For
Control and Experimental Classes

	Control Group N = 219			Experimental Group N = 308		
Grade Level	Pretest C.E.	Posttest C.E.	+/- in Months	Pretest C.E	Posttest C.E.	+/- in Months
1	2.7	3.0	+3	2.8	3.3	+5
2	3.2	3.9	+7	3.7	4.0	+3
3	2.8	2.9	+1	++	++	++
4	5.3	5.6	+3	4.8	5.0	+2
5	5.2	5.7	+5	5.0	5.3	+3
6	6.4	6.4	0	6.6	6.6	0
7	5.5	5.5	0	++	++	++
8 Rem				4.2	4.7	+5
3-8 Sp. Ed.			3.3	4.4	+11	
Average	4.44	4.71	2.7 mo.	4.34	4.76	4.1 mo.

Total Months Gained = 19
Average gain per class = 2.7 months

Total Months Gained = 20
Average gain per class = 4.1 months

++Test Scores Invalidated

3. If the same pattern of 2.7 months of growth among the C classes and 4.1 months of growth among the E classes for the 10 weeks of the experiment could be continued throughout an entire year of 40 weeks, it is projected that the C students would have actually gained a total of 10.8 months on the WRAT and the E classes would have gained an average of 16.4 months.

The second method for measuring the effect of teacher training on student spelling achievement was to compare the students' scores on a different type of spelling achievement test, one that measures students' knowledge of the most important high frequency vocabulary use in children's and adult's writing. The test selected was the Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Test (RSVT), a criterion references written spelling test that has also been standardized. The RSVT is made up of 120 words selected randomly from a longer list of the 900 words used most often in reading and writing (Stetson, 1984). The RSVT was administered in the identical manner as the WRAT and the raw scores were converted to grade equivalent scores.

Table 4.2 displays the mean grade scores and mean gains for both the C and E classes by grade level.

Discussion of Table 4.2

1. The 10 C classes gained an average of only .86 months of achievement on the RSVT during the 10 weeks of the experiment while the 12 E classes gained an average of 5.75 months meaning that the gains of the E classes were 6.7 times as much as the gains of the C classes. These differences favored the E classes by a significant amount.

2. Based on the fact that the RSVT measures knowledge of high frequency vocabulary for writing, the mean gain of .86 months among the C classes during the 2.5 months of instruction suggests that the C students learned only 34% of the high frequency vocabulary words normally learned during the same period of time among average students. On the other hand, the mean gain of 5.75 months among the E classes during the same 2.5 months of instruction suggests that the E students actually learned 230% more high frequency vocabulary than would average students normally be expected to learn during a 10 week period time.

3. If the .86 months gain made by the C students over the 10 weeks continued over a 40 week school year, it is projected that the C classes would have gained only 3.4 months of achievement for the 10 months of instruction. At the same time, if the mean gain of 5.75 months made by the E classes in 10 weeks was also projected over a 40 week school year, the anticipated gain would be 23 months or 2.3 years which is significantly higher than the average gain normally expected of average classes (10 months for 10 months of instruction) and almost 7 times as much as those students in the C classes involved in this study.

4. Because the RSVT is a criterion test composed of 120 words randomly selected from the 900 word Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program

TABLE 4.2

Mean Grade Equivelent Scores and Gains on the
Reading/Spelling Vocabulary Test
For
Control and Experimental Classes

Grade Level	Control Group N=219			Experimental Group N = 308		
	Pre	Post	+/- in months	Pre	Post	+/- in months
1	1.9	2.2	+3	2.1	2.7	+6
2	2.8	2.9	+1	2.8	3.2	+4
3	1.5	2.2	+4	3.2	3.4	+2
4	5.3	5.7	+4	4.8	5.5	+8
5	5.2	5.3	+1	5.0	5.8	+8
6	6.9	6.4	-5	6.9	7.4	+5
7	5.5	5.3	-2	4.9	5.9	+10
6 Rem	*	*	*	3.8	4.1	+3
6-8 Sp. Ed.	*	*	*	**	**	**
Average	4.16	4.29	.86 mo.	4.19	4.75	5.75 mo.

Total Months Gained - 16
Average Gain Per Class - .86 month

Total Months Gained - 46
Average Gain Per Class - 5.75 month

*No Control Remedial Group/Special Ed
** Scores were invalidated

(RSVT), the scores on the RSVT were also used to predict the number of high frequency words that students knew prior to and following the 10 week experimental period. To determine this score, the mean raw scores on the RSVT for each class were used to calculate the mean number of words known on the 900 word RSVP at the rate of 7.5 words for each raw score point on the RSVT. Table 4.3 displays the mean raw score gain and projected mean number of total words learned on the RSVP for each C and E class.

Discussion of Table 4.3

1. The mean gain between the pre and posttest of the RSVT among the C classes was only 2.7 words. Since each word on the RSVT represents 7.5 words on the 900 word Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program, it is estimated that the C classes learned a mean of 20.4 new words listed on the 900 word RSVP over the 10 week experimental period or a mean of only 2.0 words per week.

2. The mean gain between pre and posttest on the RSVT among the E classes was 7.9 words meaning that the E classes learned an estimated 59.1 new words listed on the 900 word RSVP or a mean of 5.9 new words per week.

3. The E classes learned about three times as many high frequency words as the C classes even when the amount of instructional time was the same for both. Students in the E classes whose teachers drilled them on high frequency vocabulary using research supported strategies learned three times as many new words and, at the same time, learning these high frequency words also resulted in significant gains over the C classes on the WRAT, a nationally standardized spelling test that is not dependent upon words constructed from high frequency word lists.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE STUDY

The initial concern of this study was whether the retraining of teachers would result in improved student achievement in spelling. It did!!! What made the real difference? What caused the significant improvement in achievement? There were two alterations in the training program that made the difference. The first was an alteration in the approach taken to educate administrative and classroom teacher personnel. The second was an alteration in the basic methodology the teachers used to instruct their students. In conclusion let's examine each briefly.

The following points summarize what took place to alter administrators' and teachers' beliefs about teaching spelling:

1. We asked them to state their personal beliefs about spelling instruction. (Test-Study-Test)

2. We then reviewed the literature on spelling which most of them heard for the very first time.

TABLE 4.3

Mean Raw Score Gain on the RSVT and Projected Mean Number of New Words Learned by the C and E Classes on the 900 Word RSVP

Grade Level	Mean Raw Score Gain on RSVT		Estimate Mean Number of Words Learned on the RSVP	
	C	E	C	E
1	+7	+14	+53	+105
2	+2	+9	+15	+68
3	+17	+4	+128	+30
4	+4	+8	+30	+60
5	+1	+9	+7	+68
6	-10	+2	-75	+15
7	-2	+11	-15	+82
6 Rem	++	+6	++	+45
6-8 Sp. Ed.	++	++	++	++
SUM	+10	+63	+143	+473
Mean Gain	+2.7	+7.9	+20.4	+59.1
X NUMBER OF NEW WORDS LEARNED PER WEEK			+2.0	+5.9

++Scores Were Invalidated

3. We asked them to compare their personal beliefs as well as the philosophies of the textbooks they used with their newly acquired knowledge about spelling.

4. This comparison led both administrators and teachers alike to agree that: (a) their personal beliefs were essentially the same as the practices propounded in the materials they adopted; (b) few of their personal beliefs and few of the practices in their textbooks had research support; (c) the wealth of available research is rarely used by authors of their publishers in the development of spelling programs; (d) results of research rarely, if ever, filters down to those administrators and teachers who adopt the materials; (e) in a sense, their beliefs about spelling were manipulated by the commercial materials available; and (f) armed with new knowledge about spelling instruction, they felt ready to experiment with new methods for teaching spelling.

5. We then demonstrated the simplicity of sound research-supported spelling instruction, gave them a specific method for teaching spelling (in this case the Stetson Reading-Spelling Approach), provided them with clear details on the management of instruction on day-by-day basis, and promised to give their teachers sufficient training and consultation in their classrooms.

6. Finally, and most important, educators at all levels were brought into the retraining process from the superintendent's office down to the curriculum writers of the school districts, the supervisors and, or course, the classroom teachers who were responsible for delivering the instruction to the students.

The second alteration that took place was in the changes in the instructional program itself. These alterations are summarized below:

1. Students were always given a placement test to insure that the assigned vocabulary was generally appropriate and at their level of difficulty rather than to study words only because they appear in the particular textbook assigned to that grade level.

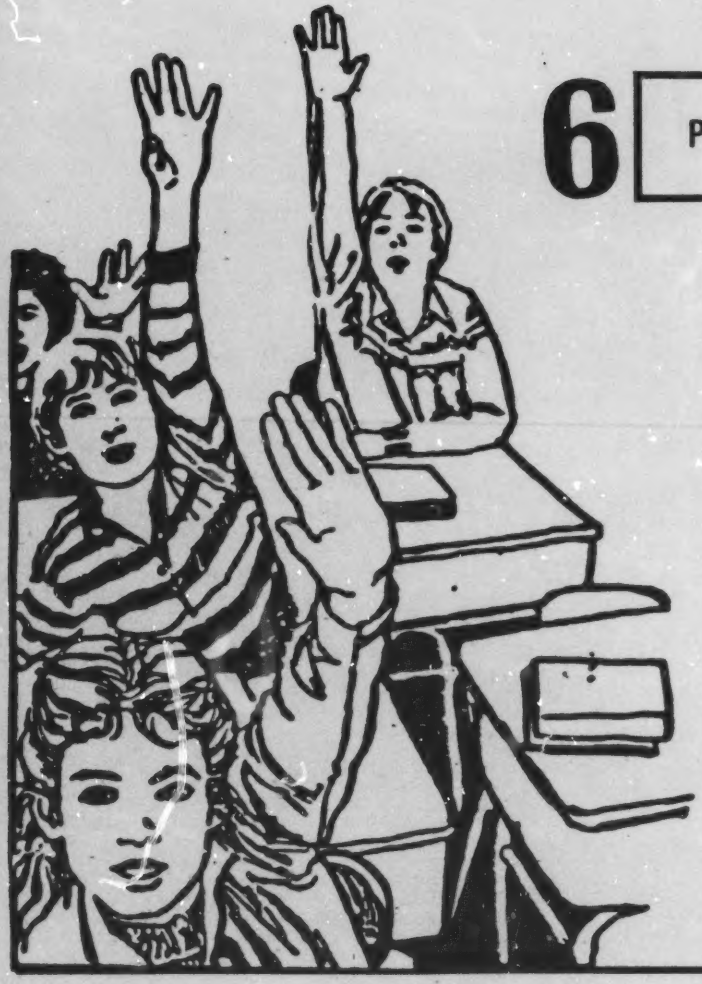
2. Students learned words considered to be most often used and most important in writing (high frequency vocabulary) rather than words that were grouped together in lessons merely because they illustrated a variety of different spelling for the same sound (e.g., eight, say, prey, make, etc.).

3. Students were saved from working on a long lsit of exercises and activities in a textbook that have little or no effect on spelling ability such as: learning rules, practice with word meaning among words that have long been used by students in their speaking, listening and reading; context clues; filling in the blanks; writing dictionary or phonetic spellings; and spelling words the way they sound.

4. The emphasis was always on looking, visualizing, spelling the word itself using visual memory, writing the word, and receiving immediate feedback rather than on studying the rules and exception which explain the particular spelling of a word and which may or not apply to any other word with the same sound pattern.

5. Students always found out at the beginning of each lesson which words were already known and which words needed their attention so that study time could be devoted primarily to those words not known rather than ignoring the pretest principle so that all words would be studied by all students whether the words were known or not.

The results of these alterations are very clear. Not only did retraining of teachers impact student achievement significantly but we now have a practical and successful training model through which teachers can be educated to improve the achievement of their students.



6 PHASE II: TRAINING MODEL

6 PHASE II: TRAINING MODEL

The results of the study were then presented to a group of other school district curriculum coordinators and principals.in a 3½ hour training program. They were invited by letter to the program and 8 districts responded.

The purpose of this session was the same as the first administrators training program. It was hoped that through an awareness of the most current research based instructional strategies and a comparison of current practices in spelling instruction that support for the curriculum changes would become evident. These administrators then returned to their districts to solicit teachers to volunteer for the training program.

As a result. 75 teachers attended a seven hour training program in May. 1984 and were given release time during the school day. The purpose of the training was the same as the phase one Teacher Training but the results of student achievement were to be used to validate the effectiveness of their current spelling program with Dr. Stetson's RSVP Program.

Teachers agreed that during the first three weeks of the 1984-85 school year they would use their basal spelling program as outlined in the teaching manual. They would pretest their students over the weekly words each Monday and record the number of words written correctly by each student. On Fridays. they would posttest their students to determine the number of words the students had learned during the week.

They also agreed to give the RSVT to determine the grade equivalent spelling score of each student and to determine where they would begin instruction in Dr. Stetson's word list if they chose to use these words.

During the fourth week of school for the next three weeks they would continue using the words from their basal spelling programs but would change the instructional strategies. Their five day instructional cycle would include:

- Monday pretest over weekly words but would allow the students to self correct their pretest for each word as it was written.
- Tuesday and Wednesday they would conduct the SRSA Drill with the entire class as explained in detail during the training.
- Thursday they would flash the words as explained and have students write the words.
- Fridays they would administer the post test. score and record the number of words written correctly.

Teachers agreed to limit their spelling instruction for each Control and Experimental activities to 20 minutes per day or 100 minutes per week. At the end of the 6th week they would average the gains or losses and compare the two approaches.

Beginning the 7th week of school they could decide to continue using their basal spelling program, use their basal with the five day teaching cycle or they could place students into small groups using Dr. Stetson's words and begin individualizing spelling instruction.

Teachers who had participated in the Experimental Group during the previous study, made a video tape of their instructional program demonstrating the five day teaching cycle and it was viewed during Phase 2 training. They also shared their successes with the program and presented their suggestions for management of the system. Their suggestions included:

1. Have children use pencils with no erasers to take the pretest and red pencils to correct their errors.

2. Call out each letter of the word and have the students check their word letter by letter after the pretest.

3. Send a duplicate list of words home to make sure the words are practiced correctly.

4. Allow practice time every day in class for at least 5 minutes.

A follow-up visit by the project consultant staff will be made during the Fall of 1984 to review the implementation plan, the pretest/post-test, the 5 day teaching cycle and the SRSA drill.

Teachers were given training in a method or procedure to evaluate experimental programs within their own schools with their students. It is hoped that school administrators and teachers will apply the technique to other selected instructional changes as teachers are trained in various instructional strategies or classroom management techniques. A follow-up questionnaire is planned to determine if this will in fact occur.

Appendix

Appendix 1

SPELLING: WHAT RESEARCH SAYS TO TEACHERS

Answer the questions below with T indicating a "true" statement or an F indicating a "false" statement.

_____1. Writing words 5 times each is an effective method in learning to spell.

_____2. Students are better spellers if they know the meaning of the words they are to spell.

_____3. Students are better spellers if they learn lists of words with common spellings. (Ex. word families – tall, ball, call)

_____4. Learning to spell by learning the rules which govern the spelling of words is an effective method of teaching spelling.

_____5. Sentence dictation is an effective method of teaching spelling.

_____6. Learning to spell syllables within a word is as effective as practicing the whole word.

_____7. Studying hard spots in words is an effective technique which improves student's spelling ability.

_____8. Studying words which have the same sound spelled in different ways is an effective teaching method. (Example: ea, ee)

_____9. Learning to write words from dictionary spellings is an effective teaching method which increases student's spelling ability.

_____10. Test-study-test is the single most effective teaching technique that improves student's spelling achievement.

_____11. Oral spelling is an effective method of teaching spelling.

_____12. Given the same amount of time, twice as many new words can be learned when the strategies used are research based.

_____13. Standardized spelling tests are an effective way to measure student spelling ability.

_____14. Elementary students are better spellers today than they were 30 years ago.

_____15. Secondary and college students are better spellers when compared to students 30 years ago.

_____16. Textbooks adopted by the State of Texas incorporate the most effective research based methods of teaching spelling.

_____17. Spelling improves when students correct their own spelling tests.

Appendix 2

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH ON SPELLING

After 80 years of research on spelling instruction, Fitzsimmons and Loomer (1978) published their review of the literature by identifying those instructional strategies which received support from research as well as those strategies which lacked support from research. Their findings are summarized below:

RESEARCH SUPPORTED STRATEGIES

1. Presenting words in list form rather than in sentences.
2. Grouping words in lessons by frequency of use.
3. Use of spelling games as a motivational technique only.
4. Immediate feedback after the writing of words.
5. Self-correction by the student.
6. Writing of words is the only proof of spelling mastery.
7. Learning words as wholes and by their structure.
8. The test-study-test method of teaching.
9. Direct teaching of words by the teacher or peer.
10. Application of newly learned words in sentences and paragraphs.
11. Looking at the word, pronouncing the word, spelling the word orally, writing the word, and self-correcting the word.

STRATEGIES NOT SUPPORTED

1. Sentence dictation.
2. Studying words in context.
3. Grouping words according to linguistic patterns (sound or letter)
4. Spelling games outside of the spelling lesson.
5. Exchanging papers to correct or teacher corrected papers.
6. Oral spelling.
7. Learning spelling rules.
8. The study-test method
9. Spelling by letter-sound association.
10. Word meanings, definitions, etc.
11. Dictionary practice.
12. Sound spelling.
13. Writing words several times in columns.
14. Studying hard spots.
15. Writing words in the air.

From: Fitzsimmons, R. L., and Loomer, B. M. Spelling: Learning and Instruction. Iowa City: Iowa State Department of Public Instruction and the University of Iowa, 1978.

Appendix 3

Wide Range Achievement Test Scores For Grades 1-14 As Reported By White & McNaughton

GRADE LEVEL	FOR READING GRADE SCORE ON WRAT	FOR SPELLING GRADE SCORE ON WRAT
1	1.5	---
2	2.4	3.5
3	3.5	5.0
4	4.4	5.7
5	5.4	6.3
6	6.5	6.8
7	7.6	7.7
8	8.3	8.3
9	9.1	8.1
10	---	8.5
11	---	8.9
12	---	9.1
13	---	9.5
14	---	9.7

Appendix 4

The 14 High Frequency Word Studies (Print, Handwriting, and Speech) Used to Compile the 900 Word Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program (RSVP)

Source	Words In Source	Wds. Selected For RSVP
In Print		
Dolch (1936)	220	220
Thorndike (1921)	10,000	860
Fry (1957)	600	480
Kucera & Francis (1967)	50,406	896
Durrell (1956)	754	534
Olson (1965)	92	90
Fullmer & Kolson (1961)	184	155
Handwriting		
Horn (1926)	10,000	870
Rinsland (1945)	14,571	860
Greene (1954)	5,507	822
Speaking		
Wepman & Hass (1969)	2,621	668
Jones & Wepman (1966)	1,102	829
Dale (1931)	769	593
Howes (1966)	4,097	231

ANALYSIS OF INSTRUCTIONAL FEATURES OF ELEMENTARY/MIDDLE SCHOOL SPELLING PROGRAMS

Spelling Program Grade/Author	Words Grouped By	Lesson Emphasis Phon	Struc	Other	Writing Activity	Pre test	Word Mean	Context Clues	Self Corr.	Look-Say Write
Spell Correctly (3) Benthul	Rules	30	3	3	XX		XX	XX		
Spell/Writing Patterns (5) Botel	Freq	6			XX	XX	XX			XX
Spelling (4) Buchanan	Rules	31			X		X	X	XX	
Words and Patterns (5) Day	Rules	18	12		XX		XX	XX	XX	
Spelling 5 (5) Elwell	Rules	18	11		XX		XX			
Basic Spelling Keys (6) Glim	Rules	18	10	4	XX		XX	XX		
Power to Spell (3) Hanna	Rules	20	4	3	XX		X	XX		
Basic Goals in Spelling (3) Kottmeyer	Rules	19	10	5	XX		XX	XX		
Dr. Spello (4+) Kottmeyer	Rules	12	5	3	X		X			
Spelling Word Book (2) Ort	Rules	18	4	6	X		XX	XX		
My Word Book (4) Rogers	Rules	12	6	5	XX		XX	XX		
Working Words in Spelling (5) Woodruff	Rules				XXX	XX	XX	XX	XXX	XXX

X Minor Emphasis
XX Regular Emphasis
XXX Heavy Emphasis

See bibliography for complete listing of programs, publishers and authors.

Writing Activity - Writing of Words, Sentences, or Paragraphs

Word Meaning - dictionary activities, word origins, roots, looking up various meanings.

Appendix 6

Spelling: First The Bad, Then The Worst News

Compiled by Dr. Elton Stetson
University of Houston
University Park

Question: Are there incorrect ways to teaching spelling?
Answer: Definitely yes!
Boutin (80), Taylor (81), and Stetson (79,81,83) found that the majority of spelling strategies and activities used today have little or no research-support. Examples include: (1) studying words having the same sound spelled different ways; (2) grouping words according to common letter patterns; (3) learning spelling rules; (4) instruction prior to pretesting; (5) practice with word meaning such as sentence completion, context clue exercises, and dictionary meaning; (6) sentence dictation; (7) translating phonic spelling to traditional spelling; and (8) studying hard spots in words, i.e., snerk words, demon words, watch-out words, etc.

Question: Are there correct ways to teach spelling?
Answer: Definitely yes!
A few strategies are consistently supported by research as being effective. These include: (1) pretesting prior to initial instruction; (2) studying only those words missed on pretest; and (3) the best method is for student to look at and pronounce word, cover and pronounce, cover and spell orally, cover and write, uncover to check accuracy, and repeat cycle if needed. Given the same amount of time, twice as many new words can be learned when the strategies used are research-based.

Question: Are the strategies used in the Texas adopted spelling programs research supported?
Answer: No!
Strategies of 11 nationally distributed basal spelling programs were evaluated using the Spelling Program Effectiveness Rating Scale - SPERS (Stetson and Boutin, 82). In seven programs, an average of two-thirds, (62.5%) of the activities had little or not research support. In three other programs, almost one-half (45%) of the activities were not supported by research. The remaining program included activities that were supported by the research 83% of the time. Yet, this same program is the lowest in sales among the 11 and is not on the Texas adopted list. On the other hand, the one program with the fewest research-supported activities (17%) is used in more classrooms in the Houston area than any other program.

Question: Do research-supported strategies really make a difference?
Answer: Definitely yes!
The research-supported strategy, the Stetson Reading-Spelling Approach (SRSA), has been compared to traditional spelling program among more than 3,000 students in grades one through eight (Williams, 79; Boutin, 80; Taylor, 81; Stetson, 82). The SRSA groups scored significantly better than traditional spelling groups on (1) weekly spelling tests, (2) long-range spelling retention tests, and (3) standardized spelling tests that require written-spelling rather than multiple-choice spelling. Furthermore, those of lowest ability benefited the most from the SRSA and ethnic minorities performed as well as or better than non-minorities.

Question: Are standardized spelling tests valid?
Answer: No!
McNaughton's (82) research concluded that: (1) multiple-choice spelling tests, i.e., select the correctly/incorrectly spelled word from among three, are tests of recognition, proofreading, and decoding; (2) written spelling tests require production and encoding and are considered the most valid way to test spelling ability; and (3) words on an achievement test should have been taught in the curriculum. In the Williams and Boutin studies cited earlier, only two words and three words were found in the SAT and ITES that had been taught during their experimental periods. In both studies, neither the SRSA nor the traditional spelling groups made significant gains on the achievement test even though there were significant gains on weekly as well as on long-range spelling tests. In Taylor's (81) study, however, 15 words were found in the Wide Range Achievement Test that had been taught during the experimental period. In her study, both the SRSA and the traditional groups made significant gains on the WRAT and the SRSA group scored significantly higher than the traditional group.

Question: Are students better or worse than 30 years ago?
Answer: Both better and worse!
At the elementary level, spelling achievement has declinded according to the results of national surveys based on multiple choice testing. However, McNaughton (82) found that, on a test of written spelling (WRAT), students in grades two through eight scored on or above their grade placement. Corroborating these finds, Barnhart (83) found that on a written test of 200 words administered to second, fourth, and eighth graders in 1953 and again in 1982, the 1982 students performed significantly better on the majority of words. Among secondary and college students, however, the situation looks bleak. McNaughton (82) discovered in her study of 1,371 students that college sophomores scored at the grade equivalent of 9.7 which was only 1.4 years above the eighth graders who scored at grade equivalent 8.3. Her conclusion was that, when formal instruction ceased, spelling growth also ceased.

CONCLUSIONS

1. **Scrutinize** commercial materials. **Compare** them carefully in light of research findings. PRESSURE publishers to conform and, unless they develop strategies that are supported by research, **Refuse** to adopt their materials.

2. **Insist** on spelling programs developed at the district/campus level. Make sure that the selected vocabulary include: (a) the one or two-thousand words most frequently used, (b) words taken directly from the curriculum materials at each grade level, and (c) words of immediate need in the classroom.

3. **Reject** the standardized spelling tests - all standardized tests for that matter - unless they contain precisely what has been taught. Otherwise, you must either **Develop and Standardize** your own spelling test or **Teach** the words on the test as many have been pressured to do in reading and in math.

4. **Adopt** research-supported strategies that (a)combine reading and spelling, (b) are easy to learn and use by students as well as parents, (c) are conducive for self-study, and (d) do not depend on commercial materials.

5. **Move swiftly**, regardless of the program, to (a) place the pretest back to Monday, (b) study only unknown words rather than all words, (c) spend less time learning rules and more time studying words, and (d) develop placement tests to match students to the appropriate level of the materials.

Appendix 7

The 900 words of the Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Program (RSVP) arranged into four levels and 60 lessons.

Level I – Reading Range of 1.3 to 2.6
Spelling Range of 1.5 to 2.7

Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Lesson 5
a	can	at	out	on
I	you	be	she	too
in	red	am	so	was
is	one	do	big	yes
me	are	no	but	will
it	for	run	did	say
go	two	all	eat	who
my	not	find	get	well
to	took	help	now	good
up	make	jump	our	that
we	come	said	ran	must
the	play	came	saw	with
see	down	four	new	black
he	blue	funny	here	where
and	away	little	three	yellow
Lesson 6	**Lesson 7**	**Lesson 8**	**Lesson 9**	**Lesson 10**
an	us	his	ride	tell
by	if	stop	soon	pull
as	off	how	they	fast
or	sit	give	went	call
of	it's	had	have	best
ate	buy	any	into	know
old	cut	her	this	them
put	hot	from	what	live
fly	ten	again	like	once
ask	going	every	white	sing
has	after	over	please	made
let	just	walk	want	gave
him	take	open	pretty	think
may	were	some	under	round
there	could	when	brown	thank
Lesson 11	**Lesson 12**	**Lesson 13**	**Lesson 14**	**Lesson 15**
cold	your	far	clean	day
both	work	six	pick	seven
use	before	own	show	stand
why	first	try	long	shall
does	don't	done	kind	eight
read	green	fall	only	small
been	found	hold	hurt	house
five	these	full	much	bring
many	right	grow	carry	laugh
goes	wash	keep	drink	today
upon	sleep	warm	start	hope
very	write	draw	never	often
wish	their	about	light	then
around	would	which	better	fine
always	because	those	myself	together

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RSVP Level II – Reading Range of 2.6 to 3.2
Spelling Range of 2.7 to 4.2

Lesson 16	Lesson 17	Lesson 18	Lesson 19	Lesson 20
man	son	time	lost	back
got	few	boat	feel	lady
boy	ago	home	past	girl
men	sat	tree	hill	real
end	war	fish	mind	snow
bed	dog	kill	need	room
cry	air	mean	road	door
die	pay	fell	sent	more
way	hit	face	life	told
hat	cow	same	pass	hand
bad	set	wait	late	dark
eye	cat	wife	note	took
sun	egg	rest	fill	next
car	fat	name	miss	stay
arm	yet	side	last	book

Lesson 21	Lesson 22	Lesson 23	Lesson 24	Lesson 25
turn	near	wind	sort	night
talk	fire	shoe	most	mother
each	even	drop	such	people
head	knew	poor	cost	father
left	high	bank	ball	window
kept	felt	hour	flew	school
farm	town	part	wear	another
hard	land	week	half	picture
baby	than	hear	able	thought
love	king	bird	idea	nothing
gone	step	milk	might	husband
food	city	ship	woman	morning
move	care	wood	thing	herself
year	swim	glad	cause	brought
sick	sure	body	watch	something

Lesson 26	Lesson 27	Lesson 28	Lesson 29	Lesson 30
water	still	music	stick	month
horse	hair	table	whole	reach
marry	ready	river	guess	color
money	until	chair	paper	class
while	story	young	alone	dress
happy	world	wrong	sound	plant
catch	fight	close	floor	cover
friend	along	change	great	church
winter	learn	street	leave	finish
garden	sister	should	hundred	office
almost	enough	dinner	himself	bridge
happen	ground	summer	person	being
doctor	brother	wonder	matter	reason
outside	children	clothes	figure	country
anything	beautiful	teacher	different	already

RSVP Level III — Reading Range of 3.2 to 4.6
Spelling Range of 4.2 to 6.4

Lesson 31	Lesson 32	Lesson 33	Lesson 34	Lesson 35
dig	box	rich	dive	won
dry	met	sail	wake	hid
fit	bury	trip	place	sad
top	chop	blow	shut	bread
fix	save	else	trap	short
hop	push	hide	rain	since
hug	onto	woke	kiss	point
lay	dead	wild	nice	alive
oh	drew	shot	plow	crash
pop	easy	swam	none	treat
row	ever	pray	pour	steal
tip	grab	lean	quit	shine
bit	join	hunt	seem	chase
yell	lock	grew	born	dirty
burn	paid	blew	cook	spell

Lesson 36	Lesson 37	Lesson 38	Lesson 39	Lesson 40
crawl	awful	spill	twenty	front
dance	below	fifty	family	wrote
faint	touch	guide	strong	began
hurry	steep	float	master	quite
kick	slept	shout	letter	brave
okay	drove	smart	eleven	tired
knock	fifth	later	afraid	twelve
scare	guard	maybe	anyway	either
silly	sharp	plain	behind	o'clock
stuck	foggy	giant	eighty	arrest
sixty	threw	other	forget	broken
allow	slide	quiet	hungry	decide
count	loose	spring	inside	polite
dream	snowy	minute	lovely	really
eaten	asleep	across	mostly	golden

Lesson 41	Lesson 42	Lesson 43	Lesson 44	Lesson 45
break	broke	nobody	whether	bright
build	paint	operate	electric	famous
climb	smoke	pretend	everything	thousand
drive	throw	quietly	sometimes	horrible
stare	tight	anywhere	fifteen	musical
field	bought	everyone	though	scream
beside	wander	except	downstairs	seventeen
caught	course	through	American	understand
wicked	listen	worried	married	Indian
sleepy	paddle	yourself	scratch	animal
stupid	careful	downtown	surprised	terrible
launch	without	fourteen	special	probably
anybody	company	practice	thirsty	interesting
against	believe	scary	finally	eighteen
suppose	purple	swallow	gotten	disappointed

RSVP Level IV – Reading Range of 4.6 to 8.6 +
Spelling Range of 6.4 to 10.0

Lesson 46	Lesson 47	Lesson 48	Lesson 49	Lesson 50
serious	actually	emotion	security	cultivate
coma	between	medical	accident	completely
artistic	capture	represent	beyond	blossom
courage	earnest	separate	collar	athlete
educate	scheme	society	disgusted	responsible
healthy	monument	confidence	satisfied	jealous
library	impossible	climate	profession	immediate
region	college	activity	magazine	individual
rural	yesterday	argument	occasion	domestic
studious	similar	damage	dramatic	especially
vague	ascend	pleasant	formation	muscular
bored	direction	realistic	hospital	tremendous
canyon	condition	opinion	incident	unfortunate
grief	possibility	morality	successfully	accomplish
height	familiar	hesitate	shoulder	automobile

Lesson 51	Lesson 52	Lesson 53	Lesson 54	Lesson 55
develop	protection	reflection	eclipse	accustom
critical	obviously	meditate	foreign	ceremony
business	institution	knowledge	intellectual	career
attractive	emergency	equipment	orchestra	desolate
apparent	expression	experience	sensitivity	ordinarily
reluctant	favorable	government	visualize	intentionally
perplexed	straightened	impression	absolutely	frustration
interpret	solution	technique	ashamed	encourage
hunched	curious	undoubtedly	cemetery	sufficient
facility	frighten	decision	discussion	assignment
disturbed	breath	burglar	fatigue	considerably
situation	ambition	arrangement	influence	disagreement
struggle	continue	advantage	miserable	community
affection	carefully	dependent	quarrel	ancient
beneath	blizzard	connection	ultimately	indication

Lesson 56	Lesson 57	Lesson 58	Lesson 59	Lesson 60
enthused	symbolism	peculiar	persuade	opportunity
horrified	decoration	exceedingly	existence	exhausted
intrigue	character	persistent	previously	imagination
language	astounding	discouraged	distinguish	luxury
particular	pathetic	circumstance	admiration	silhouette
suspicious	modernistic	explanation	prominent	sympathetic
valiantly	illustration	agriculture	anticipate	bouquet
defiantly	eventually	proposition	despondent	conscience
conclusion	temporarily	comfortable	anxious	desperate
artificial	associate	destruction	collection	discernible
counsel	determination	complicated	rejection	fashioned
evidently	crevice	depression	contemplate	hilarious
military	atmosphere	companion	admonish	mischevious
optimistic	ambulance	appearance	apprehension	hypnosis
fantastic	necessarily	appropriate	composition	disheveled

Appendix B

FIVE DAY TEACHING CYCLE

Monday

Teacher calls out the spelling words. After each word, the teacher writes the word on the board. The students are asked to check their word and circle the word, if spelled correctly. If the word is misspelled, the student draws a line through the word and writes it on the right side of his/her paper. This process is continued for each word.

Tuesday

The teacher divides the list in half and conduct the SRSA drill as explained in the SRSA Drill Handout.

Wednesday

The teacher takes the other half of the words and conducts the SRSA Drill as above.

Thursday

The teacher flashes the words to the students one at a time using 3 SW practice as explained in the 3 SW Practice.

Friday

The teacher dictates the spelling words and collect the tests to record grades.

Appendix 9

SRSA DRILL

THE STETSON READING-SPELLING APPROACH

After many investigations in the teaching of spelling, Fitzgerald (1951) concluded that the following teachnique is one of the most effective means of learning how to spell: (1)Look at the word carefully; (2) Say the word; (3) With eyes closed, see the word; (4) Cover the word and then write it; and (5) Check the spelling. The SRSA was designed around the strategies identified by Fitzgerald. Since 1951, research has continued to support such simplistic methods.

STEP ONE

VISUAL/AUDITORY WHOLE WORD ANALYSIS

Using the overhead projector, chalkboard, or large wordcard, the teacher displays the word in full view of the class and says the following (using the word pattern as an example):

Teacher: Listen to this word - Pattern.
Say this word class!

Students: pattern!

STEP TWO

VISUAL/AUDITORY WORD-PART ANALYSIS

Continuing to display the word in full view, the teacher identified the word parts and then asks the class to repeat the word parts in the same way.

Teacher: Listen to the word parts - pat tern.

Students: pat tern!

Words should be divided by the teacher in the most natural manner. The term "word-parts" are used here because some single syllable words can be divided naturally, such as c-at, c-ent, s-ound, etc.

STEP THREE

VISUAL/AUDITORY SPELLING OF WORD PARTS

Continuing to display the word in full view, the teacher spells the word by its parts, making clear breaks between the parts, and uses a rhythmical pattern such as snapping fingers, clapping hands, or tapping a pencil on the desk. Students are then asked to repeat the spelling in the same manner.

Teacher: Listen to the spelling by parts - p.a.t. - t.e.r.n.
Spell the word parts.

Students: p.a.t. - t.e.r.n.

STEP FOUR

REVIEW AND WRITING OF THE WORD

Covering the word or hiding the card so that students cannot see the word, the teacher quickly reviews steps One, Two, and Three. Then the teacher asks the class to write the word from memory.

Teacher: Say the word!
Students: pattern

Teacher: Say the word parts!
Students: pat - tern

Teacher: Spell the word parts!
Students: p.a.t. - t.e.r.n

Teacher: Write the pattern on your paper!

STEP FIVE

IMMEDIATE FEEDBACK AND SELF-CORRECTION

The teacher displays the word again after everyone has had an opportunity to write the word. Students are to compare their spelling with the displayed word. If their word is spelled correctly, a circle is drawn around the word. If the word is misspelled, a line is drawn throughthe word and the word is written correctly. The correct version of the word is then circled.

Teacher: Now look at the word again. Did you spell the word this way? If you did, draw a circle around your word. If you did not, simply draw a line through the word and write it correctly next to your incorrect word. Then circle the correct spelling.

NOTE: To remind you of the 5 steps as you are working with your students, make up a 3" x 5" index card like the one to the right and keep it in your view while you are teaching until you have mastered the system.

SRSA DRILL

Display The Word

1. Listen to the word
   Say the word
2. Listen to the parts
   Say the parts
3. Listen to the spelling
   Spell the word parts

Hide The Word

4. Say the word
   Say the word parts
   Spell the word parts
   Write the word

Display The Word

5. Correct your word

Appendix 10

3 SW PRACTICE

SRSA System, the practice test is called 3SW Practice. The 3SW involves the flashing of the 15 words previously studied during the week using a tachistoscopic technique. Instead of displaying words in full view of the class the words are flashed onto the wall if the overhead projector is used, or held up for approximately one-half second, if the file folder or plain paper strips are used. In other words the word is quickly flashed, and then quickly covered up, and each student must (1) See the word, (2) Say the word silently, (3) Spell the word silently, and (4) Write the word on paper. Thus 3SW means SEE, SAY, SPELL, and WRITE. The following instructions are suggested, for use when the overhead projector is used.

1. Place the transparency used on Monday back on the overhead projector exposing only one word with the light turned off on the projector.
2. Instruct students to number from 1-15 down the left side of their paper.
3. Say the following to the class:

   On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday we have been practicing on some spelling words. Today we are going to see how many of the words you can remember.
   I have the first word lined up to flash on the screen. This time I will not allow you to look at the word for a long time. In fact I will flash the word very quickly. So that you will be prepared to see the word, I will signal you with a special word—that word is 'READY'. When you hear that word, it means that you should have your eyes glued to the screen as a word will be flashed.
   "What is our secret word? READY!! That's right."

   You are to do four things when you see the word flashed.
   LOOK
   SAY TO YOURSELF
   SPELL TO YOURSELF
   WRITE ON YOUR PAPER

   In other words, as soon as you see the word you are to LOOK at the word, SAY the word to yourself, SPELL the word to yourself (so no one could ever hear you) and WRITE the word on your paper.
   "Now if you are all prepared, let's try the first word! READY! (flash the first word)."
4. There must be absolute silence during the 3SW drill period. As each word is flashed all children must remember to:

   LOOK
   SAY
   SPELL
   WRITE

   Some children are tempted to blurt the word out when it is flashed or some will forget and spell the word orally—none of this accepted. Everything is done with eyes, minds, and hands.
5. Some children will skip the SAY and SPELL process and want to write immediately. It is good to remind the group that if you catch them writing immediately after the flash you will know that they skipped the SAY and SPELL steps.
6. As soon as the first word has been written by all students, move to the second word and say- "Word number 2—READY!"

   Flash the second word and cover it up again.

   This process is continued until all 15 words have been flashed for the lesson.
7. The words are then self corrected with all misspelled words written correctly. This is a practice exercise and scores should not be recorded.

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Appendix 11

ACHIEVING SPELLING MASTERY WITH HELP FROM PARENTS

Teachers and parents alike have been frustrated with the spelling activities presented in the state adopted textbooks. Many times the low achievers are required to complete unfinished spelling assignments for homework. Parents have difficulty understanding the relationship of the activities to spelling. Parents are generally willing to help their children if they understand what to do. The attached letter was developed to be sent home with students using the Reading/Spelling Vocabulary Program.

Dear Parents:

We are using a new spelling approach this school year. Each Monday your child will bring home a list of words to study.

The words have been chosen because they are the most often used words in our English language. These words make up 90% of the words your child will ever (even as an adult) needs to know how to spell.

I am asking for your help. The following is a step-by-step set of directions I'd like for you to follow at home on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday evenings. It should take about 15 minutes to finish the assignment.

1. Call out the word.

2. Have your child write the word.

3. If he/she spells the word correctly have him/her draw a circle around the word. (example (c a t))

4. If he/she misspells the word have him/her draw a line through the word and write it correctly one time (example ~~c a t~~ cat)

That is all that you will need to do. An older brother or sister can help but be sure they follow the steps.

Have your child return his/her paper to school each day.

Studies have shown that this is the best way to learn to spell and we are expecting great progress this year.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

_____

Your Child's Teacher

TIMELINE OF STUDY PROJECT

TITLE VI HANDICAPPED PERSONNEL PREPARATION
Reading/Vocabulary Development

ACTIVITY	WHO WILL BE INVOLVED	PERSON RESPONSIBLE	DATE(S) OF COMPLETION
Orientation of Central Office Staff	Region V Consultants Dr. Stetson Principal Assistant Principal Coordinator Central Office Staff Lead Teacher	ESC Project Coordinator	2/20/84 RVESC 8:30 - 11:30 2/23/84 1:00 - 4:00
Project Design Development	Region V Consultants School Staff Principal Assistant Principal Coordinator Lead Teacher	ESC Project Coordinator	2/20/84 RVESC 1:00 - 4:00 2/23/84 8:00 - 11:30
Teacher Training	Dr. Stetson Lead Teacher Assistant Principal	ESC Project Coordinator	2/24/84 3/1/84 RVESC 8:30 - 3:30
Pre Test	Project Teachers	Assistant Principal Lead Teacher ESC Project Coordinator	3/12/84 3/16/84
Record Report Scores		Assistant Principal Lead Teacher ESC Project Coordinator	3/16/84 Proposed
Compile Monday/ Friday Scores Report to office	Project Teachers	Assistant Principal	4/16, 4/23, 5/0, 5/13, 5/19, 5/27, 6/4,6/11, 6/18, 6/25 Proposed
Compile Project Report (3 weeks) (1/2 day release time)	Lead Teacher	Assistant Principal	3/30, 4/27, 5/25 To be developed
Develop Training Materials			Tu be developed

Appendix 13

REGION V READING-SPELLING PROJECT

Date: _____

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

_____ _____
Student's Name

_____ Student ID Number
5-8

_____ Research Group (Choose One)
9
Exp. Gp I (1)
Exp. Gp II (2)
Exp. Gp III (3)
Control Gp (4)

_____ Grade Level of Student
10-11
1st Gd = 01
5th Gd = 05
11th Gd = 11

_____ Sex: Male (1) Female (2)
12 Choose One

_____ Race/Ethnicity (Choose One)
13 Anglo (1) Black (2)
Hispanic (3) Asian (4)
Other (5)

_____ General Achievement Level
14 (Choose One)
Below Average (3)
Average (2)
Above Average (1)

_____ School District:
15-16 _____

_____ Name of School:
17-18 _____

_____ Name of Teacher:
19-20 _____

PRETEST SCORES

_____ WRAT Pretest Raw Score
21-22

_____ WRAT Pretest Grade Score
23-25

_____ RSVT Test 1 Prestest
26-27

_____ RSVT Test 2 Pretest
28-29

_____ RSVT Test 3 Pretest
30-31

_____ RSVT Test 4 Pretest
32-33

_____ RSVT Total Raw Score (Max=120)
34-36

_____ RSVT Grade Score on Pretest
37-39

POSTTEST SCORES

_____ WRAT Posttest Raw Score
40-41

_____ WRAT Posttest Grade Score
42-44

_____ RSVT Test 1 Posttest
45-46

_____ RSVT Test 2 Posttest
47-48

_____ RSVT Test 3 Posttest
49-50

_____ RSVT Test 4 Posttest
51-52

_____ RSVT Total Raw score (Max=120)
53-55

_____ RSVT Grade Score on Posttest
56-58

_____ CTBS (Standard Score)
59-61

Appendix 14

5-8 Student Number _____

Student's Name _____

WEEKLY PRE/POSTTEST SCORES

____ Week 1 Pretest - March 12 9-10	____ Week 6 Pretest - April 16 25-30
____ Week 1 Posttest - March 16 11-12	____ Week 6 Posttest - April 19 31-32
____ Week 2 Pretest - March 19 13-14	____ Week 7 Pretest - April 24 33-34
____ Week 2 Posttest - March 23 15-16	____ Week 7 Posttest - April 27 35-36
____ Week 3 Pretest - March 26 17-18	____ Week 8 Pretest - April 30 37-38
____ Week 3 Posttest - March 30 19-20	____ Week 8 Posttest - May 4 39-40
____ Week 4 Pretest - April 2 21-22	____ Week 9 Pretest - May 7 41-42
____ Week 4 Posttest - April 6 23-24	____ Week 9 Posttest - May 11 43-44
____ Week 5 Pretest - April 9 25-26	____ Week 10 Pretest - May 14 45-46
____ Week 5 Posttest - April 13 27-28	____ Week 10 Posttest - May 18 47-48

Appendix 15

ADMINISTERING PRETEST/POSTTESTS

Week of March 27, 1984
and
Week of May 14, 1984

I. Administering the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)

1. Pass out the papers for the WRAT. Make sure students write their names at the top of the paper.

2. The words to be dictated are located in this packet. You merely pronounce each work, read a sentence containing that word, and pronounce the word again.

3. Teachers in grade 1 and 2 dictate only words 1-30. Teachers in grade 3 through 8 should dictate all 45 words.

4. When you are ready to dictate the test, simply read the statement below:

READ ALOUD

I WANT TO SEE HOW MANY WORDS YOU CAN SPELL. SOME WORDS WILL BE EASY AND SOME WORDS WILL BE HARD. YOU ONLY NEED TO WRITE THE WORDS YOU THINK YOU KNOW. I WILL PRONOUNCE EACH WORD, USE THAT WORD IN A SENTENCE, AND PRONOUNCE THE WORD AGAIN. YOU ARE TO WRITE THE WORD IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW IT OR YOU CAN JUST DRAW A LINE IN THAT SPACE IF YOU DON'T THINK YOU CAN SPELL THE WORD. REMEMBER, WRITE THE WORD IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW IT, DRAW A LINE IF YOU DON'T

NOW, LET'S BEGIN WITH WORD NUMBER ONE.

5. When the test is completed, collect papers and correct. Circle the number if the word is correct, draw an "X" through the number if the word is misspelled or the student did not attempt the word.

5. Record the Total Score at the bottom of the test paper. Total Score is the total number of words spelled correctly.

II. Administering the Reading-Spelling Vocabulary Test (RSVT)

1. Pass out the papers for TEST I of the RSVT. Make sure all students write their name at the top.

2. Turn to the words for TEST I (RSVT) in the packet. Administer the test exactly in the same manner as the WRAT. Please read the same directions to your class that you need when you administered the WRAT.

3. Collect the papers for TEST I, circle the numbers if the words are spelled correctly, place an "X" through the number if the word is misspelled or the student did not attempt the word. Record the total number correct at the bottom of the page.

Appendix 16

ELEMENTARY SURVEY

(For Teachers Who Use A Basal Spelling Textbook)

I. USE OF TEXTBOOK

1. Do you use a basal spelling text? 203 Yes 0 No

2. How often do you teach spelling each week?

186 Daily (80.9%) 21 4 times (9.1%) 15 3 times (6.5%) 8 2 times (3.5%)

3. Do you generally follow the program that the teacher's manual suggests?

181 Yes (79%) 49 No (21%)

4. Does your program recommend a pretest or trial test prior to the final test?

127 Yes (55%) 98 No (43%)

4a. If yes, when do you administer the pretest or trial test?

21 Monday (14.8%) 6 Tuesday (4.3%) 71 Wednesday (30.4%) 40 Thursday (28.4%) 3 Friday (2.1%)

4b. If yes, do you record the pretest or trial test scores?

57 Yes (4.4%) 84 No (59.6%)

4c. Who corrects the pretest or trial test?

44 (27.8%) Student self-corrects 78 (47.4%) Teacher corrects

36 (22.8%) Students exchange tests and correct

0 Other: _____

5. Generally, for the majority of my class I consider the words in my text as:

49 too easy (20.2%) 4 too difficult (1.6%) 190 about right (78.2%)

6. How much time do you allocate each day for spelling instruction?

22 (9.6%) less than 20 minutes daily

37 (16.2%) 25 minutes daily

84 (36.7%) 20 minutes daily

75 (32.8%) 30 minutes

11 (4.7%) more than 30 minutes daily

7. Look over the last six weeks Friday spelling test grades of your students. Estimate the number of students that usually make 80% or above on spelling test.

7 (3.0%) 5 out of 30 students

11 (4.7%) 10 out of 30 students

33 (14.2%) 15 out of 30 students

83 (35.8%) 20 out of 30 students

84 (36.2%) 25 out of 30 students

8914 (6.1%) 30 out 30 students

II. SPELLING STRATEGIES.

Indicate which strategies listed below are recommended and/or presented in the text you use. Also indicate if you use and agree that the strategy is an appropriate activity that increases a student's spelling ability.

Strategy I. Words are selected for each lesson because they all have a common sound that may be spelled in different ways. (e.g. steak, make, say)

(77.2%) (22.8%)

1a. Strategy I is in my spelling program. 173 Yes 51 No

1b. I agree that Strategy I is in an appropriate way to present spelling words. 178 Yes 36 No

(83.2%) (16.8%)

Strategy II. Normally each lesson presents a particular rule of spelling to be learned.

(84.6%) (15.4%)

2a. Strategy II is in my spelling program. 192 Yes 35 No

2b. I agree that learning to spell by learning the rules which govern the spelling of words is an effective method of teaching spelling. (89.6%) (10.4%)

190 Yes 22 No

Strategy III. A pretest or trial test is usually administered after the student has had instruction on the words.

(58.3%) (41.7%)

3a. Strategy III is in my spelling program. 130 Yes 93 No

3b. I agree that giving instruction and then fiving a trial test is an effective spelling method. 173 Yes 41 No

(80.8%) (19.2%)

Strategy IV. A pretest is administered on the first day of the lesson and prior to any instruction.

(14.2%) (85.8%)

4a. Strategy IV is in my spelling program. 31 Yes 187 No

4b. I agree that giving the pretest prior to instruction is an effective method of teaching spelling. 79 Yes 127 No

(38.3%) (61.7%)

Strategy V. Students are encouraged to write their words 3 to 5 times each as a way to help them study the words.

(32.1%) (67.9%)

5a. Strategy V is recommended in my spelling program. 69 Yes 146 No

5b. Strategy V is not recommended in my spelling program but I use the strategy. 130 Yes 58 No

(69.1%) (30.9%)

5c. I agree that having students write their spelling words 3 to 5 times each is an effective method of studying spelling. 183 Yes 34 No

(84.3%) (15.7%)

Strategy VI. Students look up words in the dictionary, fill in the blanks with words from spelling lists, and generally study word meanings and origins.

(46.8%) (53.2%)

6a. Strategy VI is used in my spelling program. 102 Yes 116 No

6b. I agree that having students study the meaning of words is an effective teaching strategy and improves students spelling. (82.5%) (17.5%)

174 Yes 37 No

Strategy VII. Sentence dictation is used as part of the final test. (75.5%) (24.5%)

7a. Strategy VII is recommended in my spelling program. 163 Yes 53 No
7b. I use Strategy VII. 157 Yes 46 No
(77.3%) (22.7%)
7c. I dictate sentences:
11 only one time 71 two times only
84 as many times as needed
7d. For the sentence dictation grade I:
(31.1%) 139 take off for any word that is misspelled
(8.3%) 37 take off for only the misspelled words that were presented in the lesson
(28.4%) 127 take off for words left out of a sentece
(32.2%) 144 take off for capitalization and punctuation

Strategy VIII: Students take home spelling words for parents to help.

8a. Strategy VIII is recommended in my spelling program. (54.9%) 112 Yes 92 No (45.1%)
8b. I use Strategy VIII. (90.5%) 190 Yes 20 No (9.5%)
8c. I agree that having parents help with spelling improves a student's spelling ability. (97.6%) 206 Yes 5 No (2.4%)

Strategy IX: Students study a word by: 1) looking at the word; 2)pronouncing the word; 3)covering the word and 4)checking the word for accuracy and 5) repeating the process if necessary.

9a. Strategy IX is recommended in my spelling program. 133 Yes 81 No
9b. I encourage my students to use Strategy IX 186 Yes 14 No
9c. I agree that Strategy IX is the most effective study method when learning to spell a word 169 Yes 30 No

III. IN YOUR OPINION

1. Is the spelling program you use an effective tool to assist you in teaching spelling? 156 Yes (70.3%) 66 No (29.7%)

2. Should spelling be incorporated as part of an integrated language arts program instead of a separate content area? 125 Yes (56.6%) 96 No (43.4%)

Appendix 17

Weekly Pretest/Posttest Report Form

SRSA RESEARCH PROJECT

Teacher _____ Subject _____ Grade _____

School _____ District _____

Control Period _____ Source of Vocabulary _____

Experimental Period _____

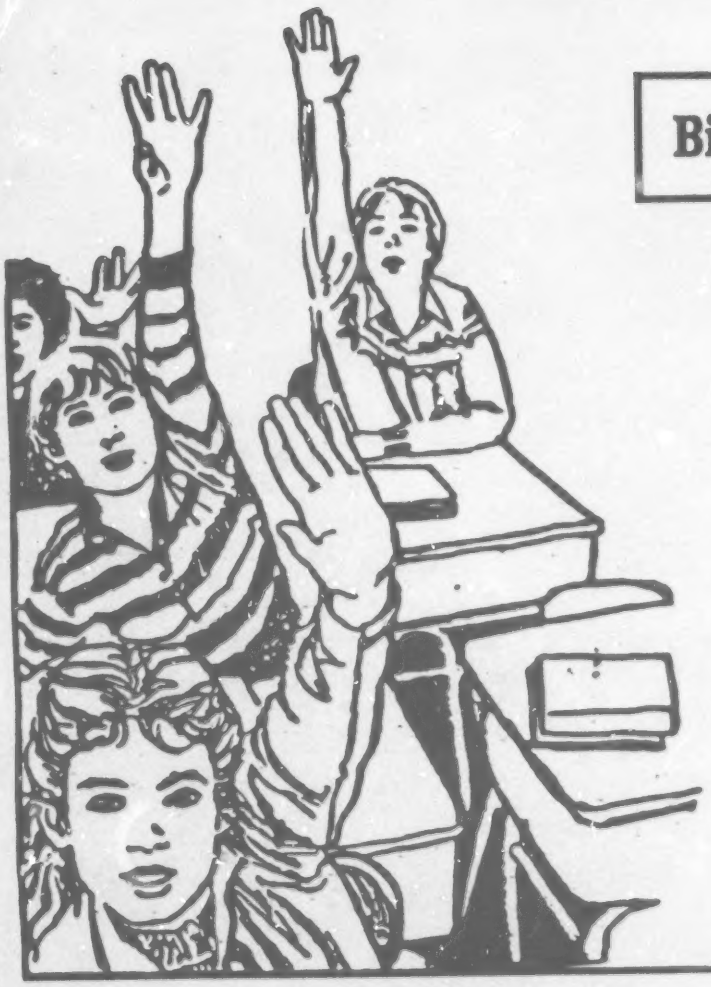
Name of Student	Lesson # ____ # of Words ___		Lesson # ____ # of Words ___		Lesson # ____ # of Words ____		Lesson # ____ # of Words ____	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post

	Name of Student	Lesson # ____ # of Words ___		Lesson # ____ # of Words ___		Lesson # ____ # of Words ___		Lesson # ____ # of Words ___	
		Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
22.									
23.									
24.									
25.									
26.									
27.									
28.									
29.									
30.									
31.									
32.									
33.									
34.									
35.									
36.									
37.									
38.									
39.									
40.									
41.									
42.									
	Sum								
	÷								
	Average								

Average Pretest, all weeks = _____

Average Posttest, all weeks = _____

Total Gain/Loss, all weeks = _____



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